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Wrecks seen as wildfire areas brace for big California storm

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Days of rain and snow across California have snarled rush-hour commutes and triggered deadly wrecks on slick roads even before the most intense storm hits Wednesday, with wildfire-ravished communities bracing for dangerous mudslides and mountain residents facing a "potentially life-threatening" blizzard.

A series of storms dropped rain up and down the state and snow in moun-

tain regions this week, but the latest storm could be the strongest that Northern California has seen so far this year. "A powerful Pacific storm will hammer the West Coast into Friday with strong winds, heavy rain and heavy mountain snow," the National Weather Service said. "Heavy rain will bring a threat of flash flooding along recent burn scars while blizzard conditions are expected" in the Sierra Nevada.

Continued on Page 3



A Caltrans worker covers spilled fuel and liquids with absorbent while cleaning up after a multi-car collision along a foggy Interstate 15 in the Cajon Pass near Hesperia Calif., Wednesday Jan. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

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Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan speaks at the beginning of a meeting with Japan's Defense Minister Takeshi Iwaya at the Pentagon, Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019, about U.S. troops killed in an explosion while conducting a routine patrol in Syria.

Associated Press

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Ron Caney

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Syria attack kills 4 Americans, complicates withdrawal plan

By LOLITA BALDOR and BASSEM MROUE

WASHINGTON (AP) — A suicide bombing claimed by the Islamic State killed at least 16 people, including two U.S. service members and two American civilians, in northern Syria on Wednesday, just a month after President Donald Trump declared that IS had

been defeated and he was pulling out U.S. forces. The attack in the strategic northeastern town of Manbij highlighted the threat posed by the Islamic State group despite Trump's claims. It could also complicate what had already become a messy withdrawal plan, with the president's senior advisers disagreeing with the decision and then offering an evolving timetable for the removal of the approximately 2,000 U.S. troops.

The attack, which also wounded three U.S. troops, was the deadliest assault on U.S. troops in Syria since American forces went into the country in 2015.

The dead included a number of fighters with the Syrian Democratic Forces, who have fought alongside the Americans against the Islamic State, according to officials and the U.K.-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

U.S. Central Command said one of the civilians killed was a Defense Department employee and the other was a contractor. The attack prompted new complaints about the withdrawal and underscored Pentagon assertions that IS is still a threat and capable of deadly attacks.

In a Dec. 19 tweet announcing the withdrawal, Trump said, "We have defeated ISIS in Syria, my only reason for being there during the Trump Presidency." He said the troops would begin coming home "now." That plan triggered immediate pushback from military leaders, including the resignation of the defense secretary. Over the past month, however, Trump and others have appeared

to adjust the timeline, and U.S. officials have suggested it will likely take several months to safely withdraw American forces from Syria. Not long after the attack on Wednesday, Vice President Mike Pence repeated claims of the Islamic State's defeat. Speaking at the State Department, Pence said the "caliphate has crumbled" and the militant network "has been defeated." Later in the day he released a statement condemning the attack but affirming the withdrawal plan.

"As we begin to bring our troops home, the American people can be assured, for the sake of our soldiers, their families, and our nation, we will never allow the remnants of ISIS to re-establish their evil and murderous caliphate - not now, not ever."

Others, however, immediately pointed to the attack as a reason to reverse or adjust the withdrawal plan. Sen. Lindsey Graham, a Trump backer and prominent voice on foreign affairs on Capitol Hill, said during a committee hearing Wednesday he is concerned that Trump's withdrawal announcement had emboldened the Islamic State and creating dangerous uncertainty for American allies.

"I know people are frustrated, but we're never going to be safe here unless we are willing to help people over there who will stand up against this radical ideology," he said.

Manbij is the main town on the westernmost edge of Syrian territory held by the U.S.-backed Syrian Kurds, running along the border with Turkey. □



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CALIFORNIA STORM

Continued from Front

Authorities in areas recently scarred by wildfires fear small rivers and creeks flooding their banks and causing massive mudslides, further damaging communities struggling to recover from a historically bad fire season.

The blazes stripped hillsides of trees and other vegetation that stabilize soil and prevent mudslides, putting at risk thousands of people living in foothill and canyon areas devastated by wildfires. That includes the Northern California region where a November fire killed 86 people and destroyed nearly 15,000 homes.

"If flooding occurs, this can quickly become a dangerous and life-threatening situation," the Butte County Sheriff's Office said.

Authorities told residents of Pulga to prepare to flee their canyon community that neighbors the town of Paradise, which was virtually incinerated two months ago by the Camp Fire.

A blizzard warning covered the Sierra Nevada and Lake Tahoe regions, where as much as 5 feet (1.5 meters) of snow was expected.

The San Francisco Bay Area was forecast to see heavy rain, and residents were warned to watch for flash floods through the end of the week.

The Sacramento area faced flood and high wind watches, with gusts that could lead to power outages, downed trees and tough driving conditions.

Even before the worst of this week's storms hit, conditions deteriorated on Cal-

ifornia roadways.

Three people, including an infant, were killed Tuesday night when their car spun out on a freeway in Placerville, about 130 miles (202 kilometers) east of San Francisco. The California Highway Patrol blamed the wreck on high speed and rain-slickened roads.

Fog on a mountain highway in Southern California triggered a 19-vehicle crash Wednesday. Thirty-five people were evaluated for injuries after the pile-up on Interstate 15 in Cajon Pass, but most declined to be taken to hospitals, the San Bernardino County Fire Department said.

A mudslide on a major Northern California freeway just north of the Golden Gate Bridge snarled the morning commute. The slide closed southbound Highway 101 across the bridge for about an hour, shutting off the only direct access to San Francisco for drivers north of the city.

In the mountainous community of Truckee where it snowed Tuesday, residents were preparing for another storm by clearing driveways and buying wood and food in case they have to stay inside.

"It took my husband an hour to get to Safeway last week because there were so many people and no one could get home," Whitby Bierwolf told the Sacramento television station KCRA. "You just need to have an alternate plan and have enough stuff in your car because accidents happen."

In the south, some evacuation orders were in place in the Malibu area west of Los Angeles and parts

of neighboring Ventura County. Both were affected by a November fire that destroyed more than 1,500 homes and killed four people.

Paul Manion was busy filling sandbags in the community of Bell Canyon.

"It's something we have to do. I mean, if the water comes, it comes," Manion told KABC-TV. "Everything around our house burned. All the houses around our house burned. But it's the hillsides that we're worried about."

Others refused to leave after authorities went door to door at the high-risk Paradise Cove mobile home park in Malibu.



Heavy tow trucks arrive to remove trucks following a multi-car collision along foggy Interstate 15 in the Cajon Pass near Hesperia Calif., Wednesday Jan. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

Beaver Valenzuela said he's survived fiercer storms and wouldn't leave until he was convinced the danger

was more immediate. "I'm not going anywhere," he told the Los Angeles news station. □

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Democrats hit Trump EPA nominee on coal lobbying, rollbacks

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's nominee to lead the Environmental Protection Agency on Wednesday called climate change "a huge issue" but not the "greatest crisis" and drew fire from Democrats at his confirmation hearing over the regulatory rollbacks he's made in six months as the agency's acting administrator. Republicans on the GOP-majority Senate Environment and Public Works Committee mostly had praise for Andrew Wheeler, who has served as the agency's acting head since Scott Pruitt's resignation in July amid ethics scandals. The committee chairman, Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., called Wheeler "very well-qualified" to take the job.

But Democrats pressed Wheeler about his work as a lobbyist helping an influential coal magnate meet with Trump administration officials before his nomination to the EPA and his moves on deregulation and on what they said was his inattention to the growing dangers of climate change.

"You seem to be consistently doing things that undermine the health and safety of this nation," Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., told Wheeler. Markey asked him why he was pulling back on regulations that proponents say protect human health and the environment.

"I believe we are moving forward" on protections, Wheeler responded.

Wheeler cited changes he had initiated to roll back future mileage standards for cars and autos and to ease Obama-era clampdowns on dirtier-burning coal-fired power plants.

He said EPA staff, whom he



Andrew Wheeler arrives to testify at a Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing to be the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

did not identify, had concluded that those rollbacks would ultimately lead to health gains. Environmental groups and formal assessments from the EPA and other agencies have contested that, saying the changes would increase pollution and increase harm to people and the climate.

Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., said the rollbacks in car mileage standards and toxic mercury emissions under Wheeler were examples of unsafe deregulation and went beyond what industries themselves wanted. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., noted Wheeler had failed to mention climate change in his initial remarks to lawmakers.

"Do you agree that climate change is a global crisis?" Sanders asked, shouting at times.

"I would not call it the greatest crisis," Wheeler said. "I would call it a huge issue that has to be addressed

globally."

Wheeler told lawmakers that he had yet to read a massive government climate change report released late last year that emphasized man-made climate change was already underway.

Wheeler said he had received one staff briefing so far on the climate change report. The work of the EPA and other government agencies, the report stresses the massive economic toll expected from increasingly severe wildfires, hurricanes and other extreme weather under climate change.

Wheeler said the news media had seized upon "worst-case scenarios" of the climate report.

"You are a former coal industry lobbyist that is sitting here," Markey responded. "That's the worst-case scenario, what you are proposing here" for easing Obama-era rules meant to clamp down on climate-

changing fossil fuel emissions.

Sen. Joni Ernst of Iowa and other Republican lawmakers, by contrast, praised Wheeler for a move to remove federal protections for millions of miles of wetlands and waterways and other proposals. Republican lawmakers said the protections had burdened farmers and others.

The grandson of a coal miner, Wheeler worked for the EPA in the 1990s and later as a longtime Republican Senate staffer.

Democrats pressed Wheeler about his lobbying before joining the EPA, saying his work for coal companies should disqualify him from leading an agency that regulates coal.

Wheeler's lobbying clients included coal magnate Bob Murray, who pushed hard on the Trump administration after the 2016 elections to grant a series of breaks for the sagging domestic coal industry.

Wheeler accompanied Murray to a March 2017 meeting to pitch Murray's list of desired rule rollbacks and other breaks for coal to Energy Secretary Rick Perry.

Wheeler told senators that his main work for Murray had been on health benefits and pensions.

"I did not work on the plan. I do not have a copy of it. I saw it briefly," Wheeler said, referring to Murray's wish list.

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., displayed a blown-up version of a photo taken of the meeting with Perry, showing Wheeler at Murray's side.

A second photo showed Murray's rollback plan in Wheeler's hands.

Murray had sought some of the coal breaks that the EPA under Wheeler has since acted on.

That included Wheeler signing a rule easing federal regulation of toxic coal ash, redoing an Obama rule that pushed electricity providers to move away from dirtier-burning coal plants and targeting an Obama rule limiting emissions of toxic mercury from coal plants.

A watchdog group, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, filed an ethics complaint Tuesday with the EPA's Office of the Inspector General alleging that Wheeler's oversight of those and other rollback proposals at EPA may have violated his government ethics pledge to abstain from regulatory decisions affecting his former lobbying client for at least two years.

EPA spokesman John Konkus called the accusation "baseless" and "wrong" and said Wheeler works with EPA ethics officials and follows their guidance. □

3 months after deadly N.Y. crash, NTSB has yet to inspect limo

By MARY ESCH

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — More than three months after 20 people died in a stretch limousine crash in rural upstate New York, federal safety investigators have yet to get their hands on the most crucial piece of evidence: the wrecked vehicle itself. The National Transportation Safety Board says it has been blocked from getting within 15 feet (4.5 meters) of the limo involved in the nation's deadliest transportation accident in nearly a decade because local prosecutors say they have priority as part of their criminal case against the limo company's operator.

Most major NTSB probes would have produced a preliminary report by this point, potentially resulting in key safety recommendations. But for now, the battered white limo involved in the Oct. 6 crash in Schoharie County sits beneath a state police tent near Albany while the NTSB seeks a judge's intervention to gain access.

In increasingly exasperated exchanges, NTSB lawyer Kathleen Silbaugh complained that the local prosecutor has refused to even discuss the federal board's jurisdiction in this matter and even hung up on a recent phone call when the issue came up. Silbaugh also expressed concern that the prolonged delay may have already caused "safety-critical" evidence to be lost.

The NTSB said in a statement that if a deal can be worked out, it will immediately send two investigators for a limited time to do "targeted work permissible" under the partial government shutdown.

"It's unfortunate," said Peter Goelz, a former NTSB managing director who now works for a Washington, D.C., consulting firm. "They might have made a recommendation, like replace the braking systems in vehicles that have been modified in this manner be-



This Oct. 6, 2018, file photo, shows the wreckage of a limousine, partially hidden in the woods, following a fatal crash in Schoharie, N.Y.

Associated Press

cause they're not robust enough to stop the vehicle fully loaded."

The 2001 Ford Excursion that was modified into a stretch limo blew through a stop sign at a T-intersection and crashed beside a country store, killing the driver, 17 passengers on a birthday outing, and two pedestrians. The vehicle had failed a state inspection that examined such things as the chassis, suspension and brakes.

Prosecutors allege the limousine company's operator, Nauman Hussain, allowed an improperly licensed driver to operate an "unserviceable" vehicle and have charged him with criminally negligent homicide. He has pleaded not guilty to the charge and remains free on bail. His lawyer has said investigators rushed to judgment. Silbaugh wrote in a letter to Schoharie County District Attorney Susan Mallery in December that because of the delay federal investigators may no longer be able to evaluate corrosion, which is critical when looking at the brakes, or the status of the vehicle's electrical system at the time of the crash.

Mallery, who has declined numerous requests for comment, told Silbaugh in a Dec. 19 letter that "your investigators have been given at least three lengthy opportunities to view the limousine." She said state police and her office were obliged to maintain the chain of custody and the integrity of evidence.

In a Jan. 7 letter requesting the intervention of Schoharie County Judge George Bartlett III, Silbaugh said federal inspectors had been allowed to view the vehicle from no closer than 15 feet (4.5 meters). She urged the judge to deny Mallery's request for a supplemental search warrant allowing removal of the vehicle's transmission and torque converter, saying to do so before the NTSB completes its initial inspection "will impact our ability to determine the vehicle's role in the probable cause of the crash and to propose safety recommendations."

On Jan. 9, Bartlett wrote that NTSB's work doesn't require court permission on a search warrant and that "until the recent kerfuffle, this court had no reason to believe that the NTSB was not given the access

necessary to fulfill its obligations." To break the impasse, he suggested NTSB propose language to be added to the search warrant, and gave defense counsel and the district attorney until Wednesday to submit any opposition.

Such friction between a criminal prosecutor and federal safety investigators is unusual, said Jim Hall, who was NTSB chairman under during the Clinton administration. While the criminal investigation does have precedence, he said, it's in the public interest that the federal safety investigation move forward without delay.

"There are a number of these specially modified vehicles operating. Having an opportunity to have a national focus on this accident is extremely important," Hall said.

On Tuesday, Gov. Andrew Cuomo proposed banning vehicles remanufactured into stretch limousines from operating in New York state. The Democrat also proposed reforms, including prohibiting U-turns for larger vehicles and eliminating the seatbelt exemption for limos, buses and taxis. □

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American anchor for Iranian TV is arrested on visit to U.S.

By JANET McCONNAUGHEY
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A prominent American anchorwoman on Iranian state television has been arrested by the FBI during a visit to the U.S., the broadcaster reported Wednesday, and her son said she was being held in a prison, apparently as a material witness. Marzieh Hashemi, who worked for the network's English-language service, was detained in St. Louis, where she had filmed a Black Lives Matter documentary after visiting relatives in the New Orleans area. She was then taken to Washington, according to her elder son, Hossein Hashemi.

The FBI said in an email that it had no comment on the arrest of the woman who was born Melanie Franklin in New Orleans and has worked for Iran's state television network for 25 years. Hossein Hashemi said his mother lives in Tehran and comes back to this country about once a year to see her family, usually scheduling documentary work somewhere in the U.S. as well.

"We still have no idea what's going on," said Hashemi, a research fellow at the University of Colorado who was interviewed by phone from Washington. He also said he and his siblings had been subpoenaed to appear before a grand jury. The incident comes as Iran faces increasing criticism of its own arrests of dual citizens and other people with Western ties. Those cases have previously been used as bargaining chips in negotiations with world pow-



In this undated photo provided by Iranian state television's English-language service, Press TV, American-born news anchor Marzieh Hashemi, right, smiles as she stands with her son in Tehran, Iran.

Associated Press

ers.

Federal law allows judges to order witnesses to be arrested and detained if the government can prove their testimony has extraordinary value for a criminal case and that they would be a flight risk and unlikely to respond to a subpoena. The statute generally requires those witnesses to be promptly released once they are deposed.

Marzieh Hashemi, an American citizen, had not been contacted by the FBI before she was detained and would "absolutely" have been willing to cooperate with the agency, her son said.

Asked whether his mother

had been involved in any criminal activity or knew anyone who might be implicated in a crime, Hashemi said, "We don't have any information along those lines."

Hashemi said his mother was arrested as she was about to board a flight from St. Louis to Denver. A spokesman for St. Louis Lambert International Airport declined to comment and referred questions to the FBI.

The constitutionality of the material witness law has "never been meaningfully tested," said Ricardo J. Bascuas, a professor at the University of Miami School of Law. "The government only

relies on it when they need a reason to arrest somebody but they don't have one."

No matter the reason for Marzieh Hashemi's detention, she should have been granted a court appearance by now, Bascuas said. She apparently was unable to call her daughter until Tuesday night. The family is trying to hire an attorney, but it has been difficult because she has not been charged with a crime, her son said.

Iran's state broadcaster held a news conference and launched a hashtag campaign for Hashemi, using the same techniques families with loved ones held in the Islamic Republic use to highlight their cases. "We will not spare any legal action" to help her, said Paiman Jebeli, deputy chief of Iran's state IRIB broadcaster. Iran's Press TV aired footage of her anchoring news programs and discussing the war in Syria, set to dramatic music.

There were no references to any case against Hashemi in U.S. federal courts, nor in Missouri.

Hashemi describes herself online as having studied journalism at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. She converted to Islam in 1982 at age 22 after meeting Iranian activist students in Denver.

She married a man she met while in journalism school. They had two sons and a daughter. Her husband is dead, said Hashemi's brother, Milton Leroy Franklin of the New Orleans suburb of Metairie.

Last week, Iran confirmed

it is holding U.S. Navy veteran Michael R. White at a prison, making him the first American known to be detained under President Donald Trump's administration.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi told state TV that Hashemi's arrest indicates the "apartheid and racist policy" of the Trump administration.

"We hope that the innocent person will be released without any condition," Ghasemi said.

At least four other American citizens are being held in Iran, including Iranian-American Siamak Namazi and his 82-year-old father, Baquer, both serving 10-year sentences on espionage charges. Iranian-American art dealer Karan Vafadari and his Iranian wife, Afarin Neysari, received 27-year and 16-year prison sentences, respectively.

Chinese-American graduate student Xiyue Wang was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Also in an Iranian prison is Nizar Zakka, a permanent U.S. resident from Lebanon who advocated for internet freedom and has done work for the U.S. government. He was sentenced to 10 years on espionage-related charges.

Former FBI agent Robert Levinson, who vanished in Iran in 2007 while on an unauthorized CIA mission, remains missing as well. Iran says that Levinson is not in the country and that it has no further information about him. His family holds Tehran responsible for his disappearance. □

Rallies call for release of detained immigration activist

By PHILIP MARCELO
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Rallies at federal immigration offices across the country Wednesday called for the release of Eduardo Samaniego, an immigration activist from Massachusetts facing deportation.

In New York City, Los Angeles, Boston, Springfield, Massachusetts, and Hartford, Connecticut, small crowds of supporters held signs saying "Free Eduardo Now" and chanted and banged drums as they delivered petitions to officials at the federal offices. A prayer vigil is planned Thursday in Atlanta outside the immigration court where the 26-year old native of Mexico's fate may be decided.

"Eduardo gave all his heart and all his effort fighting for the rights of immigrants, so it's important that he gets the same support that he gave to others," his mother, Maricela Samaniego, said by phone prior to the events. "It gives him hope and gives me hope."

Samaniego has been in federal custody since October, when he was arrested for failing to pay a \$27 taxi fare in a suburb of Atlanta and found to have overstayed his visa.

He had been a prominent voice at immigration rallies and marches in Massachusetts in recent years, sharing his experience as a college student without proper legal documents.

Last year, Samaniego marched 250 miles (402 kilometers) from New York to Washington, D.C., with 10 others to call for passage of the DREAM Act, federal legislation that would have protected certain young immigrants living in the country illegally from deportation.

During his arrest in October, Samaniego told police he'd gone for a long run without his phone or wallet and had hopped in the cab because he didn't know how to get home, according to the police report. He told officers he'd moved from Massachusetts about five weeks prior.

Prosecutors ultimately declined to pursue charges after Samaniego paid the fare, according to court records.

But Samaniego still faces deportation because he overstayed a six-month tourist visa granted in 2009, said his lawyer, Hiba Ghalib.

"This is a difficult situation because there is no real



Supporters of immigrant rights Eduardo Samaniego gathered to present a petition with 9,000 signatures asking for his release to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement office Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019, in Springfield, Mass.

Associated Press

positive solution we can expect," she said. "His options under our current immigration laws are extremely limited."

Supporters, led by the Pioneer Valley Workers Center, complain Samaniego is being targeted because of his advocacy. They say his deportation is being "fast-tracked" and that he's been placed in solitary confinement and sub-

jected to harassment and abuse during his detention. His mother said the experience has exacerbated the post-traumatic stress, depression and anxiety he's struggled with since a 2015 natural gas explosion left him badly burned. Officials at the Irwin County Detention Facility in Ovilla, Georgia, where Samaniego has been held in recent weeks, didn't re-

spond to emails seeking comment.

In court Thursday, Ghalib says she'll seek a special hearing to consider her client's competency. He is being transferred to a psychiatric hospital in Columbia, South Carolina, this week, she said.

A judge last month denied Samaniego's request to be released until his immigration case is decided. □

Pennsylvania sued over limits on state coverage of abortion

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — The operators of 15 abortion clinics sued Pennsylvania on Wednesday in a bid to persuade state courts to reverse a decades-old decision upholding limits on the use of state Medicaid dollars to cover abortions. The lawsuit, filed in Commonwealth Court, seeks an order requiring the state's Medicaid program to begin covering abortions, without restriction, and contends that Pennsylvania's 1982 law violates the constitutional equal protection rights of low-income women.

The abortion clinics cite the same state constitutional provisions as the lawsuit decided by the state Supreme Court in 1985.

That court upheld Pennsylvania's ban on the use of state dollars for abortion, except in cases of rape, incest or to save the life of the mother.

"What's different is the law's evolved," said Susan Frietsche, the senior staff attorney at the Women's Law Project, a Pennsylvania-based public interest law center. "Other states have gone a different way that makes more sense and we have now got some empirical evidence that we didn't have in 1985. People have studied what happens to low-income women who are deprived of access to abortion and it is devastating to their lives." Pennsylvania's law is nearly identical to federal limits

on the use of federal Medicaid dollars.

Sixteen other states allow public dollars to cover abortions beyond those exceptions, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a policy and research organization that supports abortion rights.

Some other states' courts have ruled that denying Medicaid coverage for abortions is a form of sex discrimination, Frietsche said, while the court's interpretation of Pennsylvania's protections against sex discrimination has evolved.

The lawsuit filed Wednesday contends that denying Medicaid coverage of an abortion forces low-income women to put off basic needs to pay for it or

carry an unwanted pregnancy to term. Carrying to term against a woman's will could worsen her pre-existing health conditions or interfere with her job prospects or education, the lawsuit argues.

Gov. Tom Wolf's office declined comment. Wolf, a Democrat whose administration oversees Pennsylvania's \$31 billion Medicaid program, supports abortion rights.

Leaders of the Legislature's Republican majorities stayed silent about the lawsuit Wednesday. The state Legislature has voted solidly in favor of anti-abortion legislation in recent years and, given Wolf's support for abortion rights, it may be up to lawmakers

to mount a legal defense of Pennsylvania's law.

In 1985, as now, the state Supreme Court had a Democratic majority. However, at that time, the entire seven-member high court was all men. Now, it has three women on it.

The court's 1985 ruling found that the state had a legitimate "interest in preserving potential life" by limiting Medicaid's coverage of abortions and was not interfering with a woman's right to an abortion.

It also rejected the argument that the limits violated a constitution provision protecting equal rights on the basis of sex, saying that "there are certain laws which necessarily will only affect one sex." □

World Economic Forum warns of impact of global tensions

By PAN PYLAS

LONDON (AP) — International tensions and nationalist politics can further weigh on the global economy this year and hinder efforts to deal with big issues such as climate change, the organizers of next week's Davos forum warned Wednesday.

In its annual Global Risks Report, the World Economic Forum said the world is evolving into "a period of divergence following a period of globalization." A "darkening" economic outlook, in part fostered by geopolitical tensions between the United States and China, "looks set to further reduce the potential for international cooperation in 2019," it said.

"With global trade and economic growth at risk in 2019, there is a more urgent need than ever to renew the architecture of international cooperation," said Borge Brende, President of the World Economic Fo-



The congress centre, venue for the World Economic Forum, is covered with snow in Davos, Switzerland, Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2019.

Associated Press

rum, which hosts an annual gathering of business and political leaders in the Swiss ski resort of Davos.

"We simply do not have the gunpowder to deal with the kind of slowdown that

current dynamics might lead us towards."

In 2018, the global economy slowed more than most experts had predicted and stock markets posted their worst year in a decade.

Much of that has been blamed on the standoff between the U.S. and China over trade that has led to both sides imposing tariffs on hundreds of billions worth of goods.

The report, which is based on the views of around 1,000 experts and decision-makers from around the world, found that 88 percent of respondents expect a "further erosion" of global trading rules and agreements that will hold back growth.

The U.S.-China relations will be one of the main talking points at next week's gathering in Davos, with a number of high level representatives from each side due to attend, including U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and China's vice president, Wang Qishan. Britain's upcoming exit from the European Union will be another key issue after British lawmakers overwhelmingly rejected the Brexit deal Prime Minister Theresa May had negotiated with the EU.

The 2016 vote to leave the EU had been driven in large part by a belief that Brexit would restore decision-making powers to Britain. □

Greek PM survives confidence vote after coalition collapse

By DEREK GATOPoulos
NICHOLAS PAPHITIS

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Greece's left-wing prime minister narrowly won a confidence vote in parliament late Wednesday days after the governing coalition he leads collapsed over an agreement to end a long-running dispute over neighboring Macedonia's name.

Lawmakers voted 151-148 on a motion called by Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, giving his government the minimum it needed in the 300-seat legislature to survive. During a heated debate earlier in the day, Tsipras argued the Macedonia deal would bolster stability in Europe's Balkan region.

"At the critical times, we all must have a clear position," he said before the vote, which coincided with the one British leader Theresa May won over her Brexit deal with the European Union.

The leader of a small Greek nationalist party, Panos



Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, delivers his speech during a parliamentary session in Athens, on Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

Kammenos, quit as defense minister in Tsipras' government last weekend over the proposed agreement with Macedonia. The deal calls for the country to be renamed North Macedonia in exchange for

Greece lifting its objections to its young northern neighbor joining NATO and the European Union.

Several members of Kammenos' party voted to support the government. Along with independents

and opposition dissenters, they gave the 44-year-old Tsipras six votes from outside his party, allowing him to remain in power. His term ends in October.

Greece's western allies also strongly back the deal Tsip-

ras and Macedonian Prime Minister Zoran Zaev agreed to in June. Russia remains strongly opposed to the prospect of Macedonia's NATO membership.

Tsipras has strongly defended his efforts to end the 27-year dispute with Macedonia over that country's name, which Greece long argued implied designs on its own Macedonia and on Greek cultural heritage.

Tsipras had said he would seek to get the Greek parliament's approval of the name-change deal soon after the confidence vote. Hardliners in both countries claim the deal conceded too much to the other side.

But Greek government officials say they are optimistic the agreement will be ratified in Athens even though most opposition parties reject it.

In Greece, sentiment is particularly high in the northern Macedonia province, where opponents say their regional identity and heritage is being signed away.

ICC judges say Gbagbo should be released following acquittal

By MIKE CORDER
Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — International Criminal Court judges said Wednesday that former Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo and a former government minister should be released immediately following their acquittal on charges of involvement in deadly post-election violence in 2010.

Prosecutors have said they will appeal the acquittals once judges issue their written majority decision clearing Gbagbo and Charles Ble Goude. Prosecutors asked judges not to release the men or to release them only under strict conditions designed to ensure they do not flee justice.

But Presiding Judge Cuno Tarfusser said a majority of the three-judge panel rejected the prosecution request, clearing the way for the men to be released once logistical and diplomatic formalities are completed.

"Both Mr. Gbagbo and Mr. Ble Goude have recog-



Supporters of former Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo celebrate outside the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

nized the court's jurisdiction and have undertaken to return to the court if and when their presence is required," Tarfusser said.

Gbagbo was the first former president to go on trial at the global court and his case was seen as a mile-

stone in efforts to bring to justice the highest-ranking leaders accused of atrocities.

More than 3,000 people were killed in late 2010 and early 2011 in violence that erupted after Gbagbo refused to accept defeat by

his rival and current Ivory Coast President Alassane Ouattara.

A small group of supporters of the two men drank Champagne and flashed victory signs outside the court after the ruling.

One of Gbagbo's daugh-

ters, Marie Laurence Gbagbo, was among those celebrating. "We are really proud," she said. "Justice prevailed, the truth came out and he's coming out the right way."

Judges first ordered the men's release Tuesday after acquitting them on charges of crimes against humanity including murder, rape and persecution.

Prosecutors can appeal Wednesday's decision, potentially holding up the men's release.

Tarfusser said the process of working out the logistics of freeing Gbagbo and Ble Goude should give prosecutors time to ask the court's appeals chamber to issue a stay of the release order.

Ivory Coast government spokesman Sidi Tiemoko Toure said the acquittals triggered "demonstrations of both joy and disapproval" in Abidjan and called for calm. The administration was thinking of the victims "and assures them of its support," Toure said in a statement. □

Sweden nears end of political deadlock; Lofven may stay PM

By JAN M. OLSEN
Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — Caretaker Prime Minister Stefan Lofven of Sweden moved a step closer to forming a center-left governing coalition after a small left-wing party on Wednesday cleared the path for him to serve a second term.

The move could end a four-month deadlock to form a coalition in Sweden.

Two center-right parties already have agreed to abstain from voting against Lofven in Friday's ballot in parliament on whether he should be Sweden's next prime minister, leading a Social Democrat-led minority government likely with the left-leaning Greens.

Jonas Sjostedt of the small Left Party said it also would abstain, saying the alternative would have been a center-right government backed by the right-wing, anti-migrant Sweden Dem-



Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Lofven attends a press conference after his meeting with the Speaker of the parliament Andreas Norlen, in Stockholm, Monday, Jan. 14, 2019.

Associated Press

ocrats party

In Sweden, a prime minister can govern as long as there is no majority against him or her.

Wednesday's development means three parties will abstain from voting against Lofven and two — his own Social Democrats and the Greens — will vote for him. This gives Lofven 195 lawmakers in the 349-seat Riksdagen, where a

majority is 175 seats.

Parliament Speaker Andreas Norlen on Wednesday nominated Lofven for Friday's vote, after which Lofven likely will present his government.

Swedish politicians are trying to form a government without the Sweden Democrats, which has neo-Nazi roots. Both the center-left and the center-right blocs have refused to cooper-

ate with the Sweden's third-largest party, which made great strides in the Sept. 9 national election.

The emergence of Sweden Democrats, which has worked to moderate its image in past years, reflects how deeply Sweden is being transformed by migration.

The largest of the Scandinavian countries, with 10 million people, has been

welcoming to migrants and refugees for decades. Many Swedes have long cherished humanitarian values as a centerpiece of their national identity.

In 2015, Sweden took in a record 163,000 migrants — the highest per capita of any European country. Since then, the country has sharply restricted immigration, but many Swedes complain that society cannot cope with integrating so many newcomers, many of them Muslims from Africa and the Middle East.

The center-right opposition was left fuming by Wednesday's move.

"It seems Sweden will get a new left-leaning government," said Ulf Kristersson, leader of the country's second-largest party, the Moderates, which now would be in opposition. "It is an absurd coalition, because the Center Party and the Liberals have been tricked into a government." □

US military says service members killed in Syria blast

BEIRUT (AP) — A number of U.S. troops were killed in an explosion while conducting a routine patrol in Syria on Wednesday, the U.S. military said, an attack that came less than a month after U.S. President Donald Trump announced his intention to withdraw troops from the war torn country. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the morning attack, which local groups said killed 16 people in the U.S.-patrolled town of Manbij.

The claim calls into question Trump's claim that IS has been defeated in Syria — his stated reason for pulling 2,000 American troops out of the country.

"We have defeated ISIS in Syria, my only reason for being there during the Trump Presidency," Trump tweeted in December in announcing his intention to bring back U.S. troops "NOW."

Vice President Mike Pence repeated the claim Wednesday, saying the Islamic State "caliphate has crumbled" and the militant network "has been defeated." His comments in a speech at the State Department came shortly



This frame grab from video provided by Hawar News, ANHA, the news agency for the semi-autonomous Kurdish areas in Syria, shows a damaged restaurant where an explosion occurred, in Manbij, Syria, Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

after the U.S. military announced that American soldiers were among those killed in Manbij.

Video released by local activists and news agencies showed a restaurant that suffered extensive damage and a street covered with debris and blood. Several cars were also damaged. Another video showed a helicopter flying over the area.

A security camera showed a busy street, and then a ball of fire engulfing people

and others running for cover as the blast went off.

Trump's shifting timetable for pulling U.S. troops out of Syria, a country he described as "sand and death," has left allies and other players in the region confused and jockeying for influence over a withdrawal strategy that appeared to be a work in progress. Critics have said a pullout was premature, that IS was still not defeated and a withdrawal could lead to a power vacuum that would

fuel even more violence. It also led to the resignation of Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis.

Since then, U.S. officials and Trump himself have suggested the withdrawal would be slower than initially believed. White House national security adviser John Bolton said two conditions would have to be met, including the protection of America's local Kurdish allies in northern Syria, and the total defeat of IS.

Last week, the U.S. military

began pulling out equipment from the northeast into neighboring Iraq. No troops are known to have withdrawn yet.

Manbij is highly strategic: It is the main town on the westernmost edge of Syrian territory held by the U.S.-backed Syrian Kurds, running along the border with Turkey. Mixed Kurdish-Arab Syrian forces liberated Manbij from the rule of the Islamic State group in 2016 with help from the U.S.-led coalition. But Kurdish control of the town infuriated Turkey, which views the main U.S. Kurdish ally, the YPG militia, as "terrorists" linked to Kurdish insurgents on its own soil.

The town has been at the center of tensions in northern Syria, with the militaries of two NATO members, the U.S. and Turkey, on opposing sides.

The two sides began joint patrols around Manbij in November as part of an agreement for easing tensions between the two allies.

The crowded terrain has become more combustible as Turkey threatens to attack Kurdish-run towns further east. □

Weather front brings sandstorms, hail, rain to Middle East

Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — A harsh weather front brought sandstorms, hail and rain to parts of the Middle East on Wednesday, with visibility down in the Egyptian capital as an orange cloud of dust blocked out the sky and pedestrians covered their faces from the wind gusts.

The winter's first snow fell on the Syrian capital Damascus by evening, after a day of heavy rain and strong winds. All ports on the Syrian coast were closed due to the prevailing weather conditions.

The state-run news agency said high waves in Tartous caused damage to the coastal city's seaside corniche. Damascus University postponed mid-term exams and some schools in



Vehicles drive during a sandstorm in Cairo, Egypt, Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019 as a thick sandstorm cloaked parts of the Middle East.

Associated Press

the Damascus countryside closed.

Dusty winds whipped through Israel and the West Bank as well, with hail falling near Tel Aviv and meteorologists announcing that

snow was expected later in the day in Jerusalem.

Lebanon was also battered by a storm packing rain and snow that cut off major mountain roads, including the highway that

links Beirut with Damascus. Schools were closed all over the country Wednesday because of the storm, the second heavy storm to hit the Mediterranean country this month.

The first storm had a devastating effect on thousands of refugees living in tents in eastern Lebanon's Bekaa valley and areas in the country's north, displacing many whose shelters were either flooded or destroyed by snow.

In Cairo, winds reached over 50 kilometers per hour (30 mph), bending palm trees along the Nile River, while in Libya rain, wind and cold weather was driving increased demand for electricity that overloaded the electricity grids and led to power outages.

Sandstorms are common

in the region in late winter and early spring and Egypt's Meteorological Commission urged caution but did not advise anyone to change their daily routines. Jerusalem braced for its first snow storm in years, with police preparing to shut down major highways and many local schools and universities said they would close early.

High desert winds swept through Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, carrying sand and dust, while snow was already falling in Israel's mountainous north, where torrential rain and hail stranded some cars and turned streets into rivers of mud.

In Gaza, fishermen returned to port and docked their boats to protect against the stormy sea. □



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Zimbabwe police arrest 600 in harsh crackdown on protests

By FARAI MUTSAKA

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Zimbabwe police armed with AK-47 rifles detained a prominent activist and pastor on Wednesday, part of the arrests of more than 600 people, in a harsh crackdown over protests against dramatic fuel price hikes in the economically shattered country.

State security minister Owen Ncube announced the arrests on television and thanked security forces for "standing firm" in the face of the country's most serious unrest since deadly post-election violence in August.

While some hungry Harare residents reported being tear-gassed by police when they ventured out for bread, President Emmerson Mnangagwa denounced what he called "wanton violence and cynical destruction." He noted a right to protest and said he understands the "pain and frustration," but he appeared to side with authorities who blame the opposition for unrest.

Pastor Evan Mawarire was clutching a Bible when police bundled him into their car in the capital. He had organized what became nationwide anti-government protests in 2016



Armed police officers outside the residence of Evan Mawarire, an activist and pastor who helped mobilize people to protest against the hike in fuel prices, following his arrest in Harare, Zimbabwe, Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

against mismanagement and then-President Robert Mugabe's long stay in power.

"They are alleging that he incited violence through Twitter and other forms of social media in the central business district," said Beatrice Mtetwa, the pastor's lawyer.

There were widespread reports of violence as Zimbabwe faced a third day of protests over what has

become the world's most expensive gasoline.

Zimbabwe's largest telecom company, Econet, sent text messages to customers saying it had been forced by the government to shut down internet service.

"The matter is beyond our control," it said. Internet service returned hours later but social media remained blocked.

Armed police and soldiers

broke up groups of more than five people in Harare, while desperation for food forced some people to venture into the streets. But virtually all shops were closed.

Police fired tear gas after a crowd tried to overrun a shopping center that opened to sell bread. Soldiers with AK-47s took

charge of the long line.

"This kind of life is unbearable, we have soldiers at fuel queues and now soldiers again are controlling the bread queue," one man said. "Are we at war?" He told The Associated Press that it was the only shop open. "I have no choice but to wait. People are hungry at home," he said. He spoke on condition of anonymity out of concern about possible retaliation.

A spokesman for the main opposition MDC party, Nkululeko Sibanda, said in a Twitter post that "party leadership" had been detained. "This is only deepening the political crisis in the country," he said.

As Mnangagwa makes an extended overseas trip that will include a stop at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, to plead for more foreign investment, former military commander and Vice President Constantino Chiwenga, a hardliner, is in charge at home.

Eight people were killed on Monday when police and military fired on crowds, according to Amnesty International. □

Model who said she has dirt on Russian oligarch speaks out

MOSCOW (AP) — An imprisoned model from Belarus who claimed last year that she had evidence of Russian involvement in helping elect Donald Trump president has told Russian media that she can't wait to be released.

Anastasia Vashukevich who has been in a Thai pris-

on since February last year was given a suspended sentence on Tuesday and ordered to be deported after she pleaded guilty to soliciting and conspiracy. Vashukevich, also known as Nastya Rybka, earlier claimed to have recordings of Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska talking

about interference in the 2016 U.S. election, but never released them.

State-owned news agency RIA Novosti in Vashukevich's first interview since her arrest quoted her as saying that she is looking forward to a free life. She made no comment about her allegations about Deripaska. □

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After crossing into Guatemala, migrants set sights on Mexico

By SONIA PEREZ D.

AGUA CALIENTE, Guatemala (AP) — More than 1,000 Hondurans were walking and hitchhiking through Guatemala on Wednesday, heading toward the Mexico border as part of a new caravan of migrants hoping to reach the United States.

Guatemala's migration authority said just over 1,300 people were able to register at the border and pass through frontier controls under the watchful eyes of about 200 police and soldiers at the Agua Caliente crossing. Some migrants told The Associated Press that they crossed informally elsewhere.

Miria Zelaya, who left the Honduran city of Colon and was traveling with 12 relatives, said she did not know what sort of work she hopes to find in the United States but was not dismayed by tougher immigration policies under President Donald Trump.

"That does not discourage me," Zelaya said. "The need is greater."

Migrants leaving Central America's Northern Triangle nations of Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala routinely cite widespread poverty, lack of opportunity and rampant gang violence as their motivation.

Many in the group registered for 90-day visas in Guatemala, saying they felt it would offer peace



Honduran migrants walk along the roadside through Esquipulas, Guatemala, as they make their way toward the U.S. border, early Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

of mind on the 300-mile (540-kilometer) trek to Mexico's southern border.

Hector Alvarado, a 25-year-old announcer, said he had been shut out of job opportunities for belonging to the political opposition and felt forced to leave to find work. He learned about the caravan on Facebook, said goodbye to relatives and hit the road.

"My loved ones have already cried over of my leaving," Alvarado said. "Now I have to press on."

The latest trek north comes as U.S. President Donald Trump has been working to convince the American

public that there is a crisis at the southern border to justify construction of his long-promised border wall. Trump's demand for billions of dollars to that end has resulted in a standoff with Congress that has forced a partial government shutdown.

The fate that awaits the migrants at the Mexico-U.S. border is uncertain. Previous caravans that were seized upon last year by Trump in the run-up to the 2018 midterm election have quietly dwindled, with many having gone home to Central America or put down roots in Mexico. Many others —

nearly half, according to U.S. Border Patrol arrest records — have sought to enter the U.S. illegally.

About 6,000 Central Americans reached Tijuana in November amid conflict on both sides of the border over their presence in the Mexican city across from San Diego. As of earlier this week, fewer than 700 remained at a former outdoor concert venue in Tijuana that the Mexican government set up as a shelter to house them.

Mexico has issued humanitarian visas to about 2,900 migrants from last fall's caravan, many of whom are

now working legally there with visas.

Also Wednesday about 100 migrants set out as a group from the capital of El Salvador, hoping to join the larger group from Honduras. Their numbers represent less than a third of the estimated 350 migrants who leave El Salvador each day.

"I can't stay. I'm leaving because the gangs have threatened me — either I join them, or they'll kill me," said Adonay Hernandez, 22, who was carrying just \$20 in his pocket but was confident he will make it to relatives in North Carolina. "God is my shield."

Others hoped to find a better life in Mexico, where they have options for applying for refugee and work permits. "I know that in Mexico they are helping us," said Franklin Martinez, a 34-year-old traveling with his partner and their 2½-year-old daughter. "We are going to ask for refuge and we are going to stay and work. After we have saved enough, perhaps we will go to the United States, but our goal is to make it to Mexico." Liduvina Margarin, vice minister for Salvadorans abroad, met with the migrants before they left a downtown plaza to warn them about the dangers of the northward route. She told them that more than half the Salvadorans who left in caravans have returned to the country. □

Argentina and Brazil presidents criticize Maduro



Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro, left, and Argentina's President Mauricio Macri give a thumbs up to the press as they arrive for a lunch at Itamaraty palace in Brasilia, Brazil, Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — The conservative leaders of Argentina and Brazil threw more support Wednesday to opponents of Venezuela's socialist President Nicolas Maduro.

Argentina's President Mauricio Macri became the first head of state to visit Brasilia since the Jan. 1 inauguration of Jair Bolsonaro and the crisis in Venezuela was on their minds.

Macri said that Maduro is a "dictator trying to perpetuate himself in power through fictitious elections."

And he said the two leaders agree that the opposition-controlled congress is the "only democratically elected entity in Venezuela."

Bolsonaro said the two countries "will continue advancing toward democracy and freedom" in Venezuela.

Maduro began a second term last week after a May election many nations consider illegitimate. Venezuela's economic crisis has flooded nearby nations with millions of economic refugees. The two presi-

dents said they also discussed the Mercosur trade block, which also includes Uruguay and Paraguay.

Bolsonaro said he and Macri agreed on the importance of reducing trade barriers and bureaucracy as ways to improve Mercosur.

Brazil's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Macri and Bolsonaro also focused on ways to cooperate on boosting trade, fighting crime and corruption and work together in the defense and nuclear sectors. □

LOCAL



Rum & Cigars in a Burning Ambition



PALM BEACH — The combination of rum and cigars is mostly associated with the Caribbean and these two delights are indeed a match made in heaven. Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort understands this like no other and they offer you a unique experience this very Saturday night, January 19. Restaurant Pure Ocean presents the crème de la crème of the rums: Diplomático from Venezuela, together with the exquisite smokes of Padrón Cigars from Nicaragua. This is your chance to get to know what a celebration in tasting is about.

Chantal Beke, F&B Manager of the Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort: "Cigar lovers as well as non-cigar lovers are invited to this experience; an enchanting evening with the very best and silky rum combined with what are considered the finest cigars in the world." The Rum & Cigar Night starts at 7.30 PM and lasts until 11 PM. Within these hours you will have it all.

The package of \$ 100, 00 includes two cigars, three flights of rum, a welcome drink and snacks throughout the night, Chantal explains. There will be live entertainment that matches the theme and the waiters have prepared a special cool cocktail, naturally with the Diplomático rum as base, that can be ordered as extra.

Distributor La Cava will explain the guests why this particular rum and the cigars make up for the perfect marriage. You will be welcomed in a lounge setting at the beachside dining restaurant Pure Ocean, a not to be beaten location right on the beach that is combined with a contemporary, romantic styling. But, most importantly, besides the choice to tune in on this Rum & Cigar night, you may also enjoy a dinner at the beach if desired.

Rumalicious

Let's dive a bit deeper into the superb quality products that Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort will present to you that night. The **Mantuano** rum from Diplomático is an excellent blended rum aged for up to eight years in white oak casks, which previously served to age bourbons and malt-whisky. It combines column, batch kettle and pot still distillates elaborated from sugar cane molasses and honeys. The **Single Vintage** is a special liquid separated from the rest of the reserved for its uniqueness, and to be shared with rum enthusiasts. Distilled in vintage copper pot stills in the year indicated on the label, the rum is aged in bourbon and single malt whisky casks for twelve years. The third delight is the 12-year old **Diplomático Reserva Exclusiva**, an elegant and complex sipping rum, carefully crafted from the purest of sugar cane honeys. Highlight of the night is the special viewing of the best rum Diplomático offers: the **Ambassador**. You are welcome to try this \$ 30/40 shot rum that will take you straight to heaven. Today Diplomático is distributed in over 70 countries. It holds the "Ron de Venezuela" DOC (Protected Denomination of Origin) and is recognized as one of the finest rums in the world.

Padrón cigars are a series of robust Nicaraguan premium handmades boasting a deep and complex flavor profile. Their cigars deliver consistent performances while utilizing super-high quality tobaccos. This evening you will be in the opportunity to try two different flavored super-premium cigars and have an experience like no other.



Chantal: "Tastings are a trend, people love to taste the world and we offer them a piece of paradise with that special Caribbean-South American twist. You do not necessarily need to pre-reserve but just to be sure I would recommend it as we have limited capacity."

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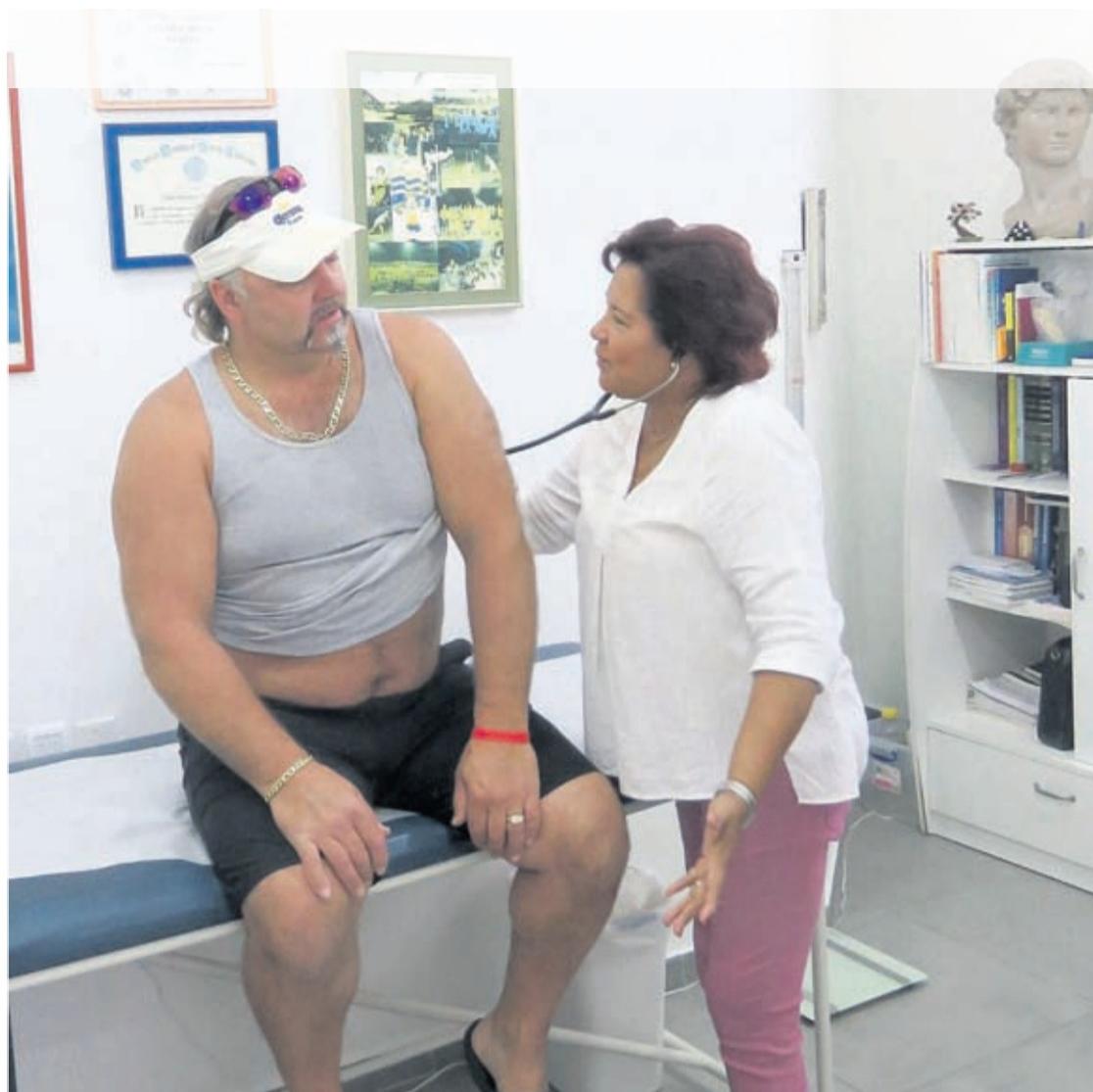
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Feeling Sick during vacation?**At Your Service: Experienced Doctor & Pharmacy under one Roof**

PALM BEACH — Feeling sick is a miserable thing during vacation. This is the time of the year you should enjoy and relax, so staying in a hotel room bed with a sunstroke, skin allergy, ear infection or intestinal problems can be a bummer. The best thing to do is to recover as soon as possible, and Dr. Lili Beke of the Aruba Walk-in Clinic, together with Palm Beach Service Pharmacy are a one-stop-shopping solution.

A Walk-In Clinic to Walk To

First of all she is calm, kind and understanding. Personal touch is her trade mark and with more than 35 years of experience as a medical doctor she knows what's going on. Doctor Beke is located in Palm Beach, at the door steps of the hotel area and her clinic is appropriately named the Aruba Walk-In Clinic. "I'd like to put myself in the shoes of the visitor. Being in a strange place, sometimes far from family or even alone and feeling sick. You can feel lost and disorientated. I can understand that and try to give them comprehension and a welcome feeling while examining them. So they leave with a smile, even if they feel a bit sick." The doctor speaks seven lan-



guages: English, Dutch, German, French, Italian, Spanish and Papiamento, meaning she can attend to almost any tourist from all over the world. "You can come in without an appointment and we have an emergency number that works 24/7, if necessary I will visit the patient where he/she is staying. We attend patients every day!" Her philosophy is as follows: As long as you enjoy what you are doing and like to help people, this profession is very rewarding." It sounds like the perfect place to heal.

Pharmacy & Drug Store with a Recipe for Success

Two quality parties that work together can only be a good thing. After you pick up your prescription at Dr. Beke's practice, you can go to the Pharmacy, right next door. The collaboration between these two results in a quick, efficient and quality service. It's just what you need when you feel the only thing you want is healing. Lennert van der Poel, general manager of the Pharmacy, which is part of a Group of 5 pharmacies, points out that convenience is not their only unique asset. "We carry a wide variety of medicines from the US, but most of the medicines come from the EU. The prices in the EU are considerably lower than in the U.S." All medicine are European registered with the same standard as U.S. products. "The law in the States allows visitors to get medicines here for the use of six months and many repeated guests or time share owners do so. This saves them a lot of money. It is however mandatory to have a prescription from a local doctor", says van der Poel. Most common medicines requested by visitors are antibiotic, pain killers and anti-allergy medications.

Naturally we wish you the healthiest, most wonderful vacation of your life on our Happy Island. But In case you are in need of a doctor and a pharmacy, just turn around, walk in and feel welcome to be cured! □



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ORANJESTAD – We would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island. Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

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With a large sign at the entrance of the airport: "Airport International Reina Beatrix" now has its own logo



ORANJESTAD - Aruba Airport Authority N.V. (AAA), company that manages and operates Airport International Reina Beatrix (AIRB) in the presence of Minister of Tourism Mr. Dangui Oduber introduced an official logo for the airport, separate from the logo currently being used to identify AAA as the authority.

When creating the AIRB logo the objective was for it to be representative of Aruba and relatable for the Aruban community. The AIRB logo consists of the Aloe Vera, the Sun, Arrows and the International Airport Code for Airport International Reina Beatrix:

- The Aloe Vera is one of Aruba's oldest sources of income. This plant was the most substan-



tial product distributed world-wide from Aruba. To commemorate this, the plant is included as a national symbol

- With year-round sunny days in the Caribbean, the sun is important for the tourism of Aruba. Tourists keep coming back because of our climate

- Aruba Airport serves various markets in regions of the world with 30 gateways spread over these markets. The arrows represent the

different markets and destinations from and to Aruba with Red representing the US market, Orange representing the Canadian market, Yellow representing the European market, Green representing the Latin American market and Blue representing the Caribbean market

- AUA is the international airport code used for Airport International Reina Beatrix

"We believe it's very important for the airport to have its own unique branding that's separate from the company/authority that runs it. We are not replacing the existing logo, it will simply be exclusively used for AAA. We are convinced that the AIRB logo reflects the island's cultural heritage and will help to further differentiate Aruba Airport from other airports in the region," said AAA CEO Mr. James Fazio regarding the introduction of the new AIRB logo.

Simultaneously with the launch of the AIRB logo, the airport also unveiled the new entrance sign to the airport which will captivate the attention of the airport passengers upon arrival to the airport.

The AIRB logo will be used to brand the airport on all social media platforms and the airport itself. Airport visitors can take a picture with the AIRB logo at the entrance to the airport and post it on Facebook/twitter/Instagram using the hashtag #AUAAirport to have the opportunity to win AIRB logo memorabilia. □

Honor to Connor Steelband Extravaganza

SAN NICOLAS — On Tuesday afternoon Sweet Pan Music Productions presented a Press Conference at Charlie's Bar and restaurant. Nico Connor together with Charles Brouns from Charlie's Bar, Stanley Dabian from department of Culture, DJ Caleto (Ivan Barrera), Angel Hazel teacher at Aruba PanMan Foundation and Paula Engelen PR

Sweet Pan Music Productions, provided information for the upcoming event THIS FRIDAY: Honor to Connor Steelband Extravaganza.

All excited and ready to showcase the performing artists who will be honoring Aruba's no. one Steel Pan Pioneer the late Edgar Connor on this day, his birthday

and also to celebrate Carnival 65th anniversary, were Edgar Connor was present from the beginning 65 yrs ago!!

They all firmly believe in keeping the culture, the heritage of Steel Pan music alive to enhance its audio and visibility by creating different platforms to continue encouraging other Steelbands and Steel Pan



artists here on our island. On Friday the 18th of January 2019 Aruban Steelpans artists and bands will be performing at this special event. Performing artists will be; The Aruba Invaders, Quiver Quips Steel Orchestra, The Boys Pan Experience, North Stars, Next Generation, Aruba Panman Foundation students, Carnaruba with a Carnival Costume Show, DJ Caleto with a wonderful music selection spinning vinyl re-

cords and Mighty Rusty will perform one of his hits songs composed by Antoni Gario dedicated to the Panman.

We hereby invite Aruba and our visitors to come, support and enjoy our Steel Pan Music heritage and culture with the Honor to Connor Steelband Extravaganza starting at 6pm till 10pm in front of Charlie's Bar in the mainstreet (B v/d Veen Zeppenfeld Straat) of San Nicolas. □

SPORTS



In this Sunday, Jan. 18, 2004 file photo, Lindsey Vonn celebrates on the podium after finishing third in an alpine ski, women's World Cup downhill race in Cortina D'Ampezzo, Italy.

Associated Press

Vonn to start injury-delayed final full season in Cortina

By ANDREW DAMPF
AP Sports Writer

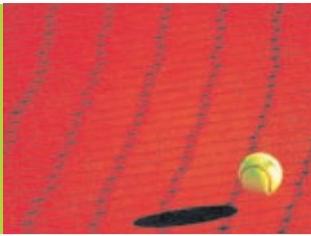
CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy (AP) — It's going to be an emotional weekend for Lindsey Vonn.

Finally ready to open her injury-delayed final full season on the World Cup circuit, Vonn will also be racing in one of her favorite resorts for the last time.

"It's kind of a lot to process. There's a lot going on at one time," Vonn said at a news conference Wednesday. "I'm trying to enjoy it as much as I can without getting too stressed out. I love it so much here."

The resort nicknamed the "queen" of the Dolomites Range was where Vonn earned her first World Cup podium result back in 2004; and where she broke the all-time women's wins record with victory No. 63 in 2015 — with a surprise visit from then-boyfriend Tiger Woods.

Continued on Page 23



BIG BALLER



Lakers deal Bulls eighth straight loss

Los Angeles Lakers guard Lonzo Ball shoots as Chicago Bulls guard Kris Dunn defends during the first half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2019, in Los Angeles. The Lakers won 107-100.

Associated Press
Page 20

Big flex: Youngsters Tiafoe, Fritz stun seeds in Australia



United States' Frances Tiafoe celebrates after defeating South Africa's Kevin Anderson in their second round match at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia, Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

By HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Tennis Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)

— Frances Tiafoe rolled up his white shirt's right sleeve, flexed his biceps and slapped the muscle five times. Then he pounded his chest and yelled, "Yeah! Let's go! Let's go! Come on!"

Forgive the young American's exuberance. This was, after all, the biggest victory of his nascent career.

Down a set and 3-0 in the second, the 20-year-old Tiafoe came back to stun two-time Grand Slam finalist and No. 5 seed Kevin Anderson of South Africa 4-6, 6-4, 6-4, 7-5 on Wednesday in the Australian Open's second round.

"I went to a different place. I dug insanely deep," the 39th-ranked Tiafoe said. "It's all about competing. Guys are so good. It's just about how badly you want it. I want it real bad."

He was joined in the third round by another kid from the U.S. who'd never been

that far at Melbourne Park, 21-year-old Taylor Fritz, who saved 12 of the 13 break points he faced while dispatching No. 30 seed Gael Monfils of France 6-3, 6-7 (8), 7-6 (6), 7-6 (5).

Next for Fritz is a matchup against Roger Federer, the two-time defending champion in Australia and owner of 20 Grand Slam titles.

"I grew up watching a lot of the guys I play today. I can't tell you how many times I watched Monfils' highlight reel on YouTube, just growing up. 'Fed,' obviously, my whole life growing up, he was always the best, winning everything," Fritz said. "So it's really cool being able to step on the court with him again."

A day after American men went 1-5, the country's contingent produced those two upsets and threw a couple of scares into other seeded players, too, but couldn't pull off the wins.

Mackenzie McDonald pushed No. 6 Marin Cilic before losing 7-5, 6-7 (9),

6-4, 6-4, and Denis Kudla went to a fifth set before bowing out 6-4, 7-5, 3-6, 6-7 (6), 6-4 against No. 18 Diego Schwartzman. Reilly Opelka, a 21-year-old who eliminated No. 9 John Isner in an all-U.S. first-round showdown, held a 67-2 ace advantage — and a 15-inch (38-centimeter) height advantage — against Thomas Fabbiano but lost to the Italian 6-7 (15), 6-2, 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (5).

"This group (of Americans) really deserves the hype, I guess, because I think everyone's good," Fritz said.

Cilic was the 2014 U.S. Open champion and the runner-up at Melbourne Park to Federer last year. Against McDonald, an NCAA champion in singles and doubles at UCLA who is 23 years old and ranked 81st, Cilic delivered 25 aces, including on each of the last two points.

"It was a much tougher match than I expected," Cilic said. "I didn't know much about him."

As for his postmatch flex, Tiafoe said: "I hope the

For Tiafoe, it helped that Anderson's best attribute, his intimidating serve, slowed down along the way because of problems with his right arm. Anderson was repeatedly visited by a trainer during changeovers and he lost pace on his first serves as the match wore on.

Anderson was the runner-up at Wimbledon last year and at the U.S. Open in 2017 and had won all three previous matchups against Tiafoe.

But Tiafoe ended a six-match losing streak against top-10 opponents and is now into the third round at a major for the second time, equaling his best showing.

"These are the matches where they kind of define you and help you feel more and more comfortable to keep winning matches like that," Tiafoe said. "So, yeah, I'm definitely going to remember this one."

As for his postmatch flex, Tiafoe said: "I hope the

crowd liked it."

Defeat Andreas Seppi of Italy next, and Tiafoe would make his debut in the second week of a Grand Slam. He turns 21 on Sunday and said: "If I'm playing on that day and beat somebody, that's the best present I can get."

Federer, seeking a record seventh Australian Open title and third in a row, beat Dan Evans 7-6 (5), 7-6 (3), 6-3, and 2009 champion Rafael Nadal set up a third-round showdown against 19-year-old Australian Alex de Minaur with a straight-set victory of his own.

"I couldn't pull away early in the match," said Federer, who actually was two points from dropping the opening set.

The defending women's champion, Caroline Wozniacki, also advanced in straight sets, beating Johanna Larsson 6-1, 6-3, and will face Maria Sharapova next. Sharapova, whose five major titles include the 2008 Australian Open, had a 6-2, 6-1 win over Rebecca Peterson in Wednesday's last match.

Three-time major champion Angelique Kerber moved on with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over qualifier Beatriz Haddad Maia. No. 5 Sloane Stephens opened the day in Rod Laver Arena with a 6-3, 6-1 victory over her junior doubles partner Timea Babos.

Stephens, the 2017 U.S. Open champion, reached the third round of the Australian Open for the first time since 2014.

"I'm kind of conquering all the places where I've been terrible," Stephens said.

Four seeded women were sent home, including No. 24 Lesia Tsurenko, a 6-0, 6-2 loser against 17-year-old American Amanda Anisimova. No. 9 Kiki Bertens, No. 20 Anett Kontaveit and No. 29 Donna Vekic also exited. Vekic lost 6-4, 4-6, 6-1 to Kimberly Birrell, a 20-year-old Australian ranked 240th who got into the field as a wild card.

"It is so surreal," Birrell said. "That was just such a blur. I get to play again. It's crazy." □

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Breakfast with Manny Pacquiao on a rainy day in L.A.

By TIM DAHLBERG

AP Sports Columnist

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Breakfast at Manny Pacquiao's house began with a silent prayer, followed by more silence around the big dining room table as his massive entourage waited for the fighter to take the first bite.

On the morning menu in the Hancock Park house were steaming plates of rice, topped with slices of beef. A helper set a few pieces of chicken in front of Pacquiao and a small plate of dried fish to go with the rice and beef he had already half finished.

No need to watch his food intake in this training camp. Five days before his crossroads fight with Adrien Broner, Pacquaio was on his normal routine of five meals a day totaling 7-8,000 calories, almost all of which he'll burn off in the day's workouts.

The Filipino senator, philanthropist and boxer is in the winter of his athletic career, gearing up for what could be one big last fight. Saturday's bout with Broner isn't it — even with a pay-per-view price tag of \$74.95. Pacquiao trains with the knowledge that a rematch with Floyd Mayweather could possibly be just months away if all goes well.

It's why he began the day with a five-mile run in the rain through Griffith Park. It's why he was at the Wild Card Gym in Hollywood a few hours later, pounding the mitts of trainer Freddie Roach before piling in a caravan of vehicles to

head down the interstate to Las Vegas and what he hopes will be a spectacular night in the familiar MGM Grand arena ring.

"Not all boxers who reach the age of 40 can be like me," Pacquiao said, pausing to turn some Sinatra on his phone to accompany his breakfast. "The discipline is still there, the hungriness to work hard and focus on the fight is still there. More importantly the fire is still there and so is the speed." Pacquiao used that speed to build a reputation and then a career that, even in the hard-scrabble sport of boxing, is remarkable. He began boxing to earn a \$2 prize to help his mother feed the family. He made several hundred million dollars fighting, much of which he's given away to others in the Philippines.

He's back with Roach and on his way to his first fight in Las Vegas in more than three years. Everything seems familiar once again, a throwback to the days when he routinely fought for \$10 million or more — and in the case of his 2015 bout with Mayweather, much more.

The Los Angeles house is a gathering place for Pacquiao, his family, and the ever-changing entourage that follows him at every step.

It's also a shrine of sorts, with pictures of Pacquiao lining the hall and one of him standing over a prone Ricky Hatton upstairs. There's a 2009 trophy for fighter of the year from the Boxing Writers of America and an ESPY from the same year,



Boxer Manny Pacquiao, left, trains with Freddie Roach at the Wild Card Boxing Club Monday, Jan. 14, 2019, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

a reminder that it's been a decade since some of the glory of his past.

And just behind Pacquiao's spot at the head of the dining table is a painting of the Last Supper, a reminder of his devotion to religion that starts with a morning prayer and ends with Pacquiao on his knees at night with a final prayer before bed.

"When I punch I'm not relying just on my own strength," Pacquiao says. "In my hands is the power from God."

The talk is confident, though nothing more than what any fighter needs to believe before getting in the ring. Pacquiao has relied on his natural speed and power for a remarkable 24 years in a pro career that began at 16.

He's an icon in his country,

a senator whose 40th birthday party had a special guest in President Rodrigo Duterte. There's speculation Pacquiao might one day hold that office, and he says he's devoted to his work in politics and his work in fighting poverty in the Philippines.

But he's also at an age where most fighters have long since retired. Boxing is a brutal sport, and long-term exposure usually isn't good for your health.

But the sound of gloves hitting the mitts held by Roach at the Wild Card is unmistakable, a rat-a-tat-tat that is testimony to Pacquiao's claim that his speed and power remain intact. He wants to knock Broner out not only to set up a possible rematch with Pacquiao but to show he's still got fight in

him.

"His work ethic is great, his footwork brilliant," Roach said. "This morning I got four calls from people telling me Manny was out running in the rain when he should have stayed inside. I said bring him an umbrella."

Pacquiao didn't get the umbrella. He was soaking wet as he came in the front door of his home to meet, back from his run with a white towel wrapped around his neck.

This was moving day, when the entourage would pack up in vans and head down Interstate 15 to Las Vegas. Many would make the trip with Manny, others would come to Las Vegas later, hoping to get one of the 1,000 or so tickets that Pacquiao bought for his followers for the fight. □

Warriors rout Nuggets after NBA-record 51 in first quarter

By The Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson each scored 31 points as the Golden State Warriors, propelled by an NBA-record, 51-point first quarter, regained the top spot in the Western Conference by routing the Denver Nuggets 142-111 on Tuesday night.

Golden State cruised to a fifth straight win to move a half-game in front of the Nuggets, who had their 12-game home winning streak snapped. The showdown between the top two teams in the conference proved a little too big for the Nuggets, with Curry and Company putting on a shooting exhibition all night long. The clinic began early with the Warriors erupting for 51 points in the opening quarter, breaking the old mark of 50 held by several teams. The last time it happened was also against Denver when Phoenix scored 50 on Nov. 10, 1990. Golden State shot a blistering 60 percent from the field, had 38 assists and hit 21 3-pointers in leading wire-to-wire. Kevin Durant finished with 27 points and Draymond Green was a plus-41 as he had 13 assists



Golden State Warriors forward Kevin Durant, left, looks to pass the ball as Denver Nuggets forward Torrey Craig defends in the second half of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2019, in Denver.

Associated Press

to go with four points.

Malik Beasley finished with 22 points for the Nuggets. Big man Nikola Jokic struggled with early foul trouble, finishing with 17 points and eight assists in 23 minutes.

76ERS 149, TIMBERWOLVES 107

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Joel Embiid had 31 points and 13 rebounds, and Philadelphia scored 83 points in the

first half in a thrashing of Minnesota in Jimmy Butler's first game against his former team.

The Golden State Warriors were the only team to score more first-half points in a game this season when they dropped 92 on the Chicago Bulls on Oct. 29. The Sixers hit a team-record 21 3-pointers and reached their highest point total in

the 22-year history of the Wells Fargo Center.

Butler scored 19 points in the first meeting with Minnesota since it sent him to the 76ers in a package deal that brought forwards Robert Covington and Dario Saric in return. Covington and Saric were popular core pieces of Philadelphia's Trust the Process rebuild and both received massive ovations from an appreciative crowd in tribute videos.

HAWKS 142, THUNDER 126

ATLANTA (AP) — Trae Young had 24 points and 11 assists to win the showdown of past and former Atlanta point guards, leading the Hawks over Oklahoma City.

Former Hawks point guard Dennis Schroder scored 21 points in his return to Atlanta. Schroder struggled early but had 14 points in the third period when the Thunder outscored the Hawks 41-27 to reclaim the lead. Atlanta was similarly dominant in the second period, outscoring Oklahoma City 45-30 to match its high mark for any quarter this season. After holding a big lead of 15 points, the last time at 70-55, the Hawks led 70-59 at halftime.

John Collins made 12 of 14 shots from the field and led Atlanta with 26 points. Alex Len had 24 points and 11 rebounds. The Hawks were 18 of 37 on 3-pointers.

Russell Westbrook led the Thunder with 31 points and 11 assists. Paul George had 24 points and Jerami Grant added 21.

BUCKS 124, HEAT 86

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Giannis Antetokounmpo had 12 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists in his fourth triple-double of the season, and Milwaukee cruised past Miami.

Eric Bledsoe had 17 points and Malcolm Brogdon added 16 for Milwaukee, which has won 13 of 16 dating to Dec. 14. The Bucks improved to 31-12, second-best in the NBA.

Justise Winslow and Hassan Whiteside had 19 points apiece for Miami, which fell to 21-21.

PACERS 131, SUNS 97

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Bojan Bogdanovic scored 20 points in Indiana's easy victory over Phoenix.

Myles Turner returned for the first time in four games to finish with 18 points and six rebounds. Turner was nursing a sore right shoulder over the last week. □



In this Jan. 1, 2019, file photo, New York Knicks center Enes Kanter jokes with teammates during a timeout the first half of the team's NBA basketball game against the Denver Nuggets, in Denver.

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkish prosecutors are seeking an international arrest warrant for New York Knicks player Enes Kanter, accusing him of membership in a terror organization. Sabah newspaper says the Istanbul chief prosecutor's office had also prepared

an extradition request for the NBA player. Officials at the prosecutor's office could not be reached by The Associated Press for comment.

Kanter, who didn't go with the Knicks this week for their game in London because he feared he could

Report: Turkey seeks warrant for NBA player Enes Kanter

be killed over his opposition to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, responded on Twitter that the Turkish government could not present "any single piece of evidence of my wrongdoing."

"I don't even have a parking ticket in the U.S.," he wrote Wednesday.

Kanter has been an outspoken critic of Erdogan, and his Turkish passport was revoked in 2017.

This time, Sabah says prosecutors are seeking an Interpol "Red Notice" citing Kanter's ties to exiled Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen, who is blamed for a failed coup in 2016, and accusing him of providing finan-

cial support to his group.

Kanter said he feared assassination if he left the U.S. or Canada when he announced last week that he wouldn't travel with the Knicks, who play the Washington Wizards at The O2 Arena on Thursday. The team said at the time Kanter wouldn't make the trip because of a visa issue.

Kanter denied that was the problem, even posting a photo of a travel document on social media, and made it clear his issue was his safety because of Erdogan, whom he has referred to as "the Hitler of our century." "They've got a lot of spies there," he said. "I think I can get killed there easy."

It would be a very ugly situation."

While the Knicks are overseas, Kanter has posted a number of photos of himself meeting with U.S. congressmen. He also wrote an opinion piece in the Washington Post explaining his decision and his reasons for standing against Erdogan.

"My decision not to travel to London was difficult from a competitive standpoint but much easier from a safety one," he wrote. "It helps puts a spotlight on how a dictator is wrecking Turkey — people have been killed, thousands are unjustly imprisoned, and countless lives have been ruined. That is no game." □

Patriots' Edelman still making most of his opportunities

By KYLE HIGHTOWER
AP Sports Writer

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP) — His face was still a little flushed from stepping out of the subfreezing temperatures at Gillette Stadium field just minutes following the Patriots' 41-28 divisional-round win over the Los Angeles Chargers on Sunday.

Still, Julian Edelman stood at his locker satisfied — at least for a moment.

Then he was asked when he would start his preparations for their AFC championship game matchup with the Kansas City Chiefs. "Immediately," he said without hesitation. "We're going to go play the best team in the AFC, the No. 1 seed. It's going to start with an unbelievable week of practice, preparation. We need to do that to give ourselves the best chance to win."

Making the most of every one of his opportunities has become a hallmark of Edelman's 10 seasons in New England.

The Patriots were dealt a blow prior to their final two regular-season games when Josh Gordon was suspended for a violation

of the league's substance abuse policy.

But what could have created a hole in New England's receiving group has been plugged by its oldest member.

The 32-year-old Edelman has put together back-to-back vintage performances and is expected to again play a big role during Sunday's AFC championship game.

Edelman tied his regular-season high of nine catches and had a career playoff-best 151 yards receiving in New England's win over Los Angeles.

With 98 playoff receptions during his career, he moved past Reggie Wayne (93) and is second all-time behind Jerry Rice with 151. Edelman's five career 100-yard receiving games in the postseason trail only Rice's eight and Michael Irvin's six.

Edelman, who missed last season with a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee and sat out the first four games of this season for violating the NFL's policy on performance-enhancers, empathizes with

Gordon's situation.

"He was making plays for us. We wish him the best to get himself right," Edelman said. "That's a tough thing to go through. We're here to support him. But sometimes the train just has to keep on going. ... And as much as you miss him, you gotta start thinking about what you gotta do to keep on going out and try to win ballgames."

The week after Gordon's suspension, Edelman caught five of the six balls thrown to him for 69 yards and a touchdown.

Over the past three games, including the playoff win over the Chargers, Edelman has been targeted by Brady 29 times, catching 20 passes for 290 yards and a pair of touchdowns.

Edelman's performance on Sunday was in many ways a throwback effort by a receiver that has developed a reputation of being one of Brady's most dependable receivers in the playoffs. On Sunday, he was instrumental in helping the Patriots score on each of the first four drives of the game.



New England Patriots wide receiver Julian Edelman warms up before an NFL divisional playoff football game against the Los Angeles Chargers, Sunday, Jan. 13, 2019, in Foxborough, Mass.

Associated Press

said. "He came up big. We needed it and we'll need it next week, too."

That's because it's exactly the kind of ball-control, efficient offensive effort that New England will need to limit the possessions of Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes and a Kansas City offense that ended the regular season as the NFL's highest-scoring offense, averaging 35.3 points per game.

"Anytime you can start fast and score on your opening drive, good things tend to follow," Edelman said. □

Breakaway swimming league says standoff not quite over

By ANDREW DAMPF
AP Sports Writer

The independent swimming league at the center of a standoff about the right of athletes to compete for improved prize money has welcomed a decision by governing body FINA to lift a threat to ban those taking part in its competitions. Still, the International Swimming League (ISL) says that more needs to be done after FINA's threats to ban swimmers who competed in a December meeting ended up with the competition canceled.

"This is a step in the right direction to free swimmers to compete more and earn more," ISL managing director Andrea Di Nino said in a statement Wednesday. "FINA's capitulation comes in reaction to ISL's and elite swimmers antitrust lawsuits that exposed FINA's illegal threatened ban of swim-

mers who participate in ISL's events."

Olympic and world champions filed an antitrust suit in California last month over FINA's threats.

"FINA acknowledges that swimmers are free to participate in competitions or events staged by independent organizers," the Switzerland-based swim body announced Tuesday after consulting with national federations.

However, results and records will be unofficial if ISL organizers fail to get FINA's

approval, including fitting into the official events calendar and running an approved doping control program. "We can move forward but what they're saying is, 'OK, we won't disqualify you but we won't recognize your results,'" Di Nino told The Associated Press. "We consider this gesture of dialogue from FINA a positive response but it doesn't resolve the problem. ... We're happy to respect all of WADA's rules." FINA has countered the ISL with a proposed three-

meet series starting in March and paying \$3.9 million in prize money. It also topped up the prize fund by almost \$1 million for the short-course world championships held in China last month.

Conflict between FINA and swimmers increased before the scheduled privately run meeting in December in Turin, Italy. It was canceled amid the threatened bans. "FINA's supposed change of heart still does not address the real financial harm FINA caused to swim-

mers and the ISL by forcing the cancellation of the Turin Event, and then copying the ISL's team competition model in a further FINA effort to quash competition that benefits swimmers and fans alike," the ISL said.

In a similar case, Dutch speedskaters won a European Commission ruling in Brussels in 2017 against the Swiss-based International Skating Union. They had wanted to compete in a South Korean-organized event in Dubai but were threatened with bans. □



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Filppula's OT goal lifts surging Islanders past Blues 2-1

NEW YORK (AP) — Valtteri Filppula scored 1:37 into overtime and the New York Islanders beat the St. Louis Blues 2-1 Tuesday night for their 12th win in 15 games. Jordan Eberle had a goal in the first period for New York, and Robin Lehner stopped 30 shots.

David Perron scored the tying goal in the third period for the Blues, and Jordan Binnington — making his fourth straight start and fourth of his career — finished with 23 saves. St. Louis had won three straight and five of its previous seven.

On the winner, Filppula jumped on the ice, got a pass from Mathew Barzal and skated in on Binnington before beating him from the right side for his 10th of the season.

BLUE JACKETS 4, DEVILS 1

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Joonas Korpisalo had 29 saves and three Columbus players recorded a goal and an assist in the win over New Jersey.

Artemi Panarin, Pierre-Luc Dubois and Cam Atkinson carried the offensive load, and Boone Jenner also scored as Columbus won its fourth straight. The Blue Jackets have won six of their last eight games and 11 of the last 14 while sparing with Washington and Pittsburgh atop the Metropolitan Division.

Korpisalo has started three of the last four games ahead of star Sergei Bobrovsky and won each time. The 24-year-old Finn could soon find himself the team's No.1 goalie as Bobrovsky has refused to sign a contract extension with Columbus and may be traded before the deadline next month.

Blake Coleman scored and Keith Kinkaid had 30 saves for the Devils, who saw a two-game winning streak end.

RANGERS 6, HURRICANES 2

NEW YORK (AP) — Mika Zibanejad had two goals and two assists to lead the Rangers past Carolina.

Pavel Buchnevich and Tony DeAngelo each scored twice and Mats Zuccarello added three assists as the Rangers won for only



New York Islanders center Valtteri Filppula (51) celebrates his game-winning goal in overtime against the St. Louis Blues in an NHL hockey game, Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2019, in New York. The Islanders won 2-1 in overtime.

Associated Press

the second time in eight games. Henrik Lundqvist made 34 saves for his 444th win, one behind Terry Sawchuk for sixth place on the NHL's career list.

Saku Maenalanen had two goals and Curtis McElhinney stopped 22 shots but the Hurricanes lost for just the second time since the new year.

CANADIENS 5, PANTHERS 1

MONTREAL (AP) — Antti Niemi made a career-high 52 saves and Montreal extended its winning streak to three games with a victory over Florida.

Shea Weber, Phillip Danault, Max Domi, Jesperi Kotkaniemi and Brendan Gallagher scored for Montreal. Mike Hoffman scored in the first period for the Panthers, who have dropped seven consecutive games, their longest skid of the season. Florida's last victory was on Dec. 31, against the Detroit Red Wings.

Roberto Luongo was expected to start in goal for Florida, but James Reimer got the nod in a game-time

decision. Reimer stopped 23 shots.

RED WINGS 3, DUCKS 1

DETROIT (AP) — Gustav Nyquist broke a tie with 4:16 left and Darren Helm scored a little later, lifting Detroit and extending Anaheim's franchise-record losing streak to 12 games. Nyquist lifted his stick at the left side of the net and tipped in Danny DeKeyser's shot from the slot. Helm's goal with 2:33 remaining gave the Red Wings a two-goal cushion.

John Gibson stopped 22 shots for the Ducks, who haven't won since Dec. 17. Prior to the skid, they had won nine of 10.

Detroit won consecutive games for the first time in more than a month.

Rickard Rakell deflected a shot past Red Wings goalie Jimmy Howard midway through the second period on a power play. Howard finished with 23 saves.

PREDATORS 7, CAPITALS 2

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Viktor Arvidsson had his second career hat trick

and Nashville routed Washington to snap a two-game skid.

Nick Bonino scored twice, and Rocco Grimaldi and Calle Jarnkrok each added a goal as 12 players contributed at least one point for the Predators.

They set a season high for goals, topping the six they scored Dec. 31 in a win at Washington, the defending Stanley Cup champion. Mattias Ekholm and Ryan Johansen each had two assists, and Juuse Saros made 26 saves for the win. Nicklas Backstrom and T.J. Oshie scored for the Capitals.

WILD 3, KINGS 2, SO

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Jason Zucker scored in a shootout for the first time in his career to lift Minnesota over Los Angeles.

It was Zucker's first shootout goal in five tries. He was the only shooter from either team to convert.

Nino Niederreiter and Eric Staal scored for the Wild, who had lost their previous two games.

Ilya Kovalchuk and Jeff Carter scored for the Kings, who came into the game tied with Ottawa for the fewest points in the league.

JETS 4, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 1

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP) — Kyle Connor had two goals and an assist as Winnipeg beat Vegas.

Connor scored short-handed and into an empty net. Mathieu Perreault had a goal and Mark Scheifele also scored into an empty net for Winnipeg. Scheifele added an assist and Blake Wheeler contributed a pair. Laurent Brossoit, making his 11th start this season, stopped 43 shots for Winnipeg, which swept a three-game homestand and improved to 5-0-1 in its past six.

Brandon Pirri scored and Marc-Andre Fleury made 22 saves for Vegas, which is 8-2-0 in its last 10 games.

LIGHTNING 2, STARS 0

DALLAS (AP) — Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 35 shots for his second shutout in a week, Ondrej Palat and Mikhail Sergachev scored and Tampa Bay blanked Dallas.

Vasilevskiy improved to 10-2-1 since his return from injury, posting his third shutout this season and 15th of his career for the Lightning, who have an NHL-best 74 points.

Anton Khudobin made 19 saves for Dallas.

SHARKS 5, PENGUINS 2

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — Tomas Hertl scored three goals and Joe Thornton celebrated his 1,000th game for San Jose by adding another that helped the Sharks win their seventh straight game. Marcus Sorensen also scored and the Sharks improved to 16-3-2 in their past 21 games with a convincing victory over the dangerous Penguins. Martin Jones made 22 saves to tie his career best by winning his eighth straight start.

Kris Letang and Derick Brassard scored for the Penguins, who have lost two in a row following a stretch of 10 wins in 11 games. Matt Murray stopped 24 shots but had his career-high nine-game winning streak snapped. □

VONN

Continued from Page 17

Vonn holds the Cortina record with 12 wins — a solid block of her total 82 World Cup victories — many of them involving close battles against previous Cortina record-holder Renate Goetschl (10 wins), fellow American Julia Mancuso and longtime rival Maria Hoefl-Riesch.

The only place Vonn has won more is in Lake Louise, Alberta, where she has 18 victories.

Vonn was planning on opening her season in Lake Louise in November until she injured her left knee in training a week before her scheduled first race.

"If there's a place — minus Lake Louise — that I could make a return then I think Cortina would be No. 1 on my list," Vonn said, speaking with her dog, Lucy, sitting on her lap.

"I was hoping that this last season would have been a lot different starting in Lake Louise but nothing in life seems to happen the way I hoped or planned. So I just take the cards that I'm dealt and I'll play them with what I have."

Vonn needs five more wins to break the all-time World Cup record of 86 victories held by Swedish great Ingemar Stenmark. And for the first time, the American will compete while knowing her retirement date. "So that calculation of risk is different now, because this is my last season," she said as she prepares for downhill races Friday and Saturday, followed by a super-G on Sunday. "I'm just going to go out there and ski like I did when I won my first podium here and whatever happens, happens. If I break the record then I will be very excited. If I don't then I don't."

Having previously announced that she would retire at the end of this season, Vonn altered her plans after her injury and will now hang up her skis following the Lake Louise races at the beginning of next season.

And she says she won't change those plans — even if she needs only one more win to break the record after Lake Louise.

"Unfortunately my body is telling me it's enough," Vonn said. "It's not for lack

of motivation or lack of desire or lack of will, it's a lack of cartilage to be honest. My body can't continue to do what I love."

Vonn's right knee is permanently damaged from previous crashes, and she wears braces on both legs when skiing. The 34-year-old has had to fight back from injuries many times: torn ACLs, fractures near her left knee, a broken ankle, a sliced right thumb, a concussion and more.

"I hope to be able to free ski when I have kids down the road," Vonn said. "I need to stop now so that I'm not having a lot of problems when I'm older. Skiing has always been my No. 1 but it's time to look at the future."

When Vonn claimed her first podium result in 2004 by finishing third in a downhill it was a career breakthrough.

"I remember calling my dad and crying on the phone and saying that I finally made it," Vonn said. "That was one of the first times that I felt like I really belonged on the World Cup."

"It was because I really un-



Lindsey Vonn, of the United States, smiles as she arrives for a news conference in Cortina Ampezzo, Italy, Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

derstood Cortina as a race hill and I finally perfected my mental routine in Cortina and I honestly haven't changed anything in my preparation since that day."

When Vonn broke the all-time wins record held by Austrian great Annemarie Moser-Proell, it was another special Cortina moment.

"My whole family was there and there was obviously a lot of pressure," Vonn recalled. "My mom, my dad, my step mom, my step dad — everyone came over. ... That was a really big mile-

stone in my career." The scenery in Cortina is spectacular enough to match the memories. The Olympia delle Tofane course is set amid spectacular jagged peaks and rock outcroppings — usually framed by clear blue skies and drenched in sunshine.

"There's nothing quite like when get up to the top of the chairlift and you're waiting for inspection and the sun is rising and it's kind of orange and red and you can see the whole valley," Vonn said. □

Dakar Rally leader Al-Attiyah wins penultimate stage

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Nasser Al-Attiyah won the penultimate stage to extend his Dakar Rally lead to nearly an hour on Wednesday, and rider Toby Price finished with his main rivals to keep the motorbike lead in Peru.

Once again, Al-Attiyah avoided the trouble his other rivals found on the 313-kilometer, four-hour loop in the dunes around Pisco.

Stephane Peterhansel, the most successful driver in the world's toughest rally, quit 26 kilometers in when co-driver David Castera hurt his back. It's the first time in 10 years that the 13-time champion has abandoned the race, and only the fourth time in 31 years. He was fourth overall at the time.

Sebastien Loeb, third overall, was gunning for a fifth stage win until his transmission broke about 60 kilometers from the finish. Then his

sparre broke 40 kilometers out. He lost more than an hour and remained third on the stage, but overall fell two hours behind Al-Attiyah.

Cyril Despres took over the stage lead but flipped his car about 20 kilometers from the finish. By the time help came, he'd lost 39 minutes.

That left Al-Attiyah able to play it safe, and he won the stage by five minutes from Nani Roma to extend his lead over in the general standings to 51 minutes. He looks set to celebrate a third Dakar victory on Thursday after the short drive into Lima.

"Every day we work very hard to be fast and not make mistakes," Al-Attiyah said. "Me and Mathieu (Baumel, co-driver), the team, work very hard to keep our car fit. The buggy is a good car. We've followed our strategy from the beginning. We've



Driver Nasser Al-Attiyah, of Qatar, and co-driver Matthieu Baumel, of France, race their Toyota during the stage nine of the Dakar Rally in Pisco, Peru, Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

been leading since stage three and building up the (gap) every day. We're quite happy."

The motorbike drama started before the stage. British rider Sam Sunderland, the 2017 champion in title contention at fourth, was penalized an hour. Argentine rider Kevin Benavides, in the top 10, was penalized three hours. Then Adrien

van Beveren, fifth overall, suffered a broken engine with 16 kilometers to go and was out.

That left a clear top three of Price, Pablo Quintanilla, and defending champion Matthias Walkner, all within six minutes of each other. But nobody attacked. From a mass start, they rode together and finished together — behind stage

winner Michael Metge of Argentina — and retained their overall positions.

Walkner said there was chaos when the first rider got lost, and the race leaders followed him. Nobody then wanted to take a risk.

"It seemed an easy day, but it wasn't. There was more to lose on a day like this than to win, so I just tried to stay with the top guys in front and do nothing stupid," Walkner said. "The chance for the podium is quite good."

Price was content. The 2016 champion is nursing a sore right wrist.

"I know it's going to be very hard tomorrow, and I'll give it my best," Price said. "I know I'm likely to be on the podium tomorrow, and it's amazing, but I want to win."

Quintanilla, only a minute behind Price, promised to "give it my 100 percent to win the race" for his first Dakar title. □

Netflix raising prices for 58M U.S. subscribers as costs rise

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Netflix is raising its U.S. prices by 13 to 18 percent, its biggest increase since the company launched its video streaming service 12 years ago.

Its most popular plan will see the largest hike, to \$13 per month from \$11. That option offers high-definition streaming on up to two different internet-connected devices simultaneously. Even at the higher price, that plan is still a few dollars cheaper than HBO, whose streaming service charges \$15 per month.

The extra cash will help to pay for Netflix's huge investment in original shows and films and finance the heavy debt it has assumed to ward off rivals such as Amazon, Disney and AT&T. While subscribers might moan a bigger monthly bill, Wall Street cheered, sending Netflix's shares up 6.5 percent Tuesday.

This marks the fourth time that Netflix has raised its U.S.



In this July 17, 2017, file photo the Netflix logo is displayed on an iPhone in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

prices; the last hike came in late 2017. But this is the first time that higher prices will hit all 58 million U.S. subscribers, the number Netflix reported at the end of September.

Previously, Netflix had continued to offer a basic, \$8-a-month streaming plan while raising rates on more comprehensive plans with better video quality and options to watch simultaneously on different devices. This time, the price for the

cheapest plan is going up to \$9 per month. A premium plan offering ultra-high definition will jump to \$16 per month from \$14. The new prices will immediately affect all new subscribers and then roll out to existing customers during the next three months. Customers in about 40 Latin America countries where Netflix bills in U.S. currency will also be affected, excepting key international markets such as Mexico

and Brazil.

Netflix had nearly 79 million subscribers outside the U.S. as of September.

Higher prices could alienate subscribers and possibly even trigger a wave of cancellations. For instance, Netflix faced a huge backlash in 2011 when it unbundled video streaming from its older DVD-by-mail service, resulting in a 60 percent price increase for subscribers who wanted to keep both plans. Netflix lost 600,000 subscribers — about 2 percent of its total customers at the time — after that switch.

"This is a more aggressive move than (investors) were expecting," said Moody's analyst Neil Begley said. "It shows Netflix is pretty confident that it still has some pricing power in the U.S." That confidence flows from the programming line-up that Netflix has built since it began focusing on exclusive shows five years ago. The acclaimed hits have included "House of Cards,"

"Orange Is The New Black," "Stranger Things," "The Crown" and, most recently, the film "Bird Box."

"We change pricing from time to time as we continue investing in great entertainment and improving the overall Netflix experience," the company said in a statement.

Consumers also have an increasing array of other streaming options.

Amazon offers a streaming service as part of its Prime shipping program for \$13 per month, or \$120 for an annual membership. Hulu sells an ad-free service for \$12 per month. AT&T's WarnerMedia unit plans a broader streaming service this year centered on HBO. Walt Disney is gearing up to launch a streaming channel this year.

With Apple also widely expected to join the video-streaming fray, the competition for programming is enabling top directors, writers and actors to charge more for their talents. □

Grocery robots detect spills - with some far-off human help

By MATT O'BRIEN

SEEKONK, Mass. (AP) — A wheeled robot named Marty is rolling into nearly 500 grocery stores to alert employees if it encounters spilled granola, squashed tomatoes or a broken jar of mayonnaise.

But there could be a human watching from behind

its cartoonish googly eyes. Badger Technologies CEO Tim Rowland says its camera-equipped robots stop after detecting a potential spill. But to make sure, humans working in a control center in the Philippines review the imagery before triggering a cleanup message over the loudspeaker.



A robot named Marty cleans the floors at a Giant grocery store in Harrisburg, Pa., Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2019.

Associated Press

Rowland says 25 of the robots are now operating at certain Giant, Martin's and Stop & Shop stores, with 30 more arriving each week. Carlisle, Pennsylvania-based Giant says it has two robots now working at stores in the state, and plans to expand to all 172 Giant stores by the middle of this year.

The chains are all part of Dutch parent company Ahold Delhaize.

The robots move around using laser-based "lidar"

sensors and pause when shoppers and their carts veer into their path.

The googly eyes are fake, but each robot has eight cameras — some directed down at the floor and others that can see shelves. Rowland said the robots can eventually be repurposed to help monitor a store's inventory.

A robot observed Tuesday at a Stop & Shop store in Seekonk, Massachusetts, alerted store associates to a price tag that had fall-

en in one aisle, and a tiny sprig of herbs in another. After moving along for a few minutes, it returned to the scene of each spill and waited until an employee pushed a button to acknowledge that the debris was picked up.

It's not the only robot that U.S. shoppers might spot this year. Walmart and Mid-western supermarket chain Schnucks have deployed robots that help monitor inventory.

A union that represents Giant and Stop & Shop workers says it's keeping an eye on Marty. It remains to be seen what the groceries will ultimately use the technology for.

UFCW President Marc Perrone said in an emailed statement that the "aggressive expansion of automation in grocery and retail stores is a direct threat to the millions of American workers who power these industries and the customers they serve." □

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Millennial Money: Don't let Instagram envy get you into debt

By BRIANNA MCGURRAN

Associated Press

When was the last time scrolling through Instagram made you feel better?

If you're like me, the puppy photos on your feed momentarily boost your mood, but the parade of carefully selected and artfully edited experiences leaves you feeling depleted. How can these people afford to travel to New Zealand? When will it be your turn to road trip along the Pacific Coast Highway, drinking wine on sunlit rooftops along the way?

You know by now that social media leaves out the fender benders, arguments and weather mishaps essential to any vacation. You can add financial faux pas to that list.

A full 48 percent of U.S. households have credit card debt, according to a recent NerdWallet analysis. The average household with debt carries \$6,929 in balances from month to month, which means paying about \$1,141 in interest per year.

You can't really know how much money your friends have. But it's safe to say that at least some of them may not be able to afford the trips that make you feel inferior without going into credit card debt. Here's how to keep Instagram from bullying you into overspending.

FIND THE SOURCE OF YOUR FOMO

If a friend's vacation photo really got under your skin, explore why. The destination or trip itself may not be



In this Jan. 13, 2016, file photo, icons for Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest are displayed on a window in New York.

Associated Press

the source of that FOMO, or fear of missing out. Has it been a while since you've taken time off work, and you're resentful of how relaxed this person seems? Are you jealous of how close they appear to their partner or friends?

There could be ways to ease your anxiety for free, without vacationing at all. Consider scheduling a mental health day and going to a local museum on a day with free or reduced-price admission to get your mind off work. Round up friends interested in starting a book club or hiking group that meets monthly so you can feel part of a community.

VACATION FOR CHEAP

If traveling is what you crave, plan a debt-free vacation by estimating how much you'll spend on transportation, lodging, meals and activities and saving that amount in advance. Some online savings accounts let you create sub-accounts for specific purposes, so setting aside money each month for travel means you save passively over time.

But if you haven't been saving and need a getaway stat, stay flexible on dates and locations and use price-tracking apps to find hotel and flight deals. Consider staying local and taking a short road trip to

an attraction in your area you've never been to. Split an Airbnb nearby with a group of friends and spend a weekend doing activities that don't involve screens, like playing cards, exploring nature and making art. Credit cards aren't always the enemy; with a good credit score and a commitment to paying off your balance each month, you can get a rewards card that lets you earn points or cash back that will subsidize future trips. Be realistic about your ability to spend responsibly and avoid carrying a balance, though. The interest you could end up paying, and the anxiety that comes with balloon-

ing credit card debt, can quickly erode any post-vacation glow.

CUT BACK ON SCROLLING

There's another, potentially nuclear-sounding option to prevent social media-influenced spending: Don't look at Instagram at all.

You don't have to go cold turkey. You can continue to post your own photos or communicate with friends via direct message, but rein in mindlessly perusing other people's feeds. Start by setting a goal to wait until noon to open the app, or choosing two specific times of day to check it. Like any behavior you're trying to change, it will be hard at first, but you'll likely be surprised by how little you miss the app. Fill the time you get back with activities you enjoy.

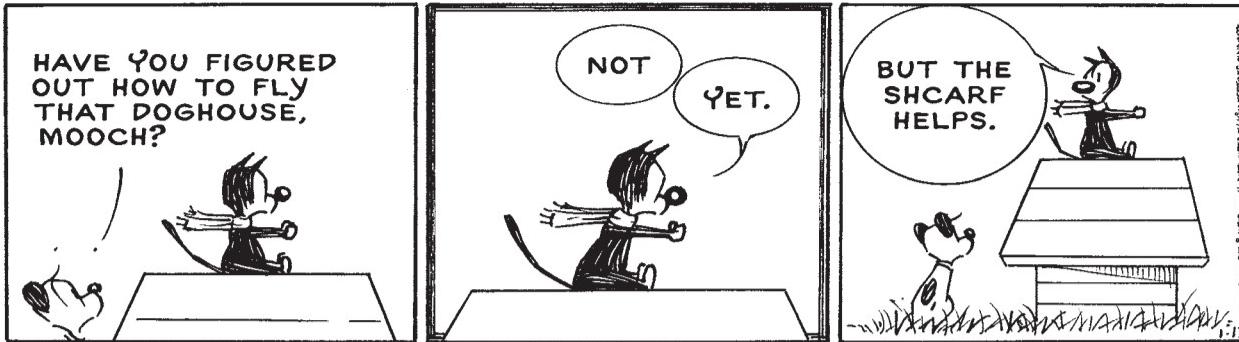
The ideal outcome? Making plans and choosing travel experiences based on what makes you happy, not on a highly filtered version of someone else's life. □

ARUBA Clean

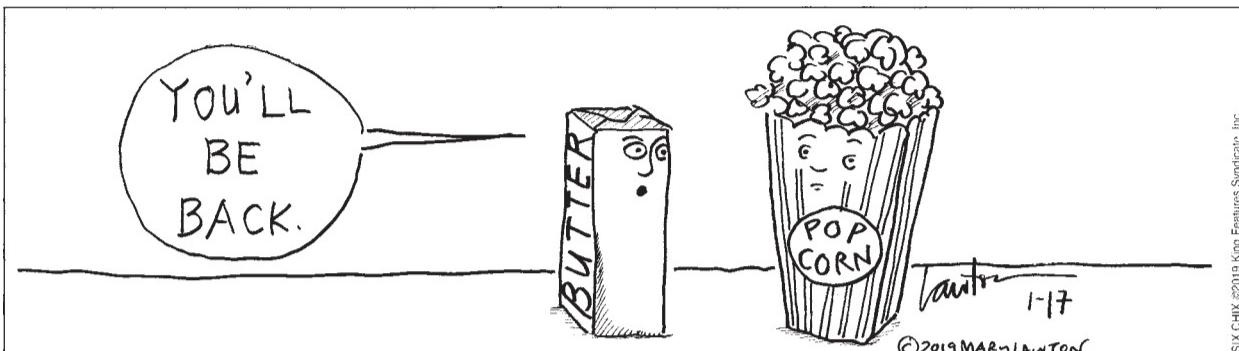
HELP US KEEP ARUBA CLEAN

is more DUSHI

Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



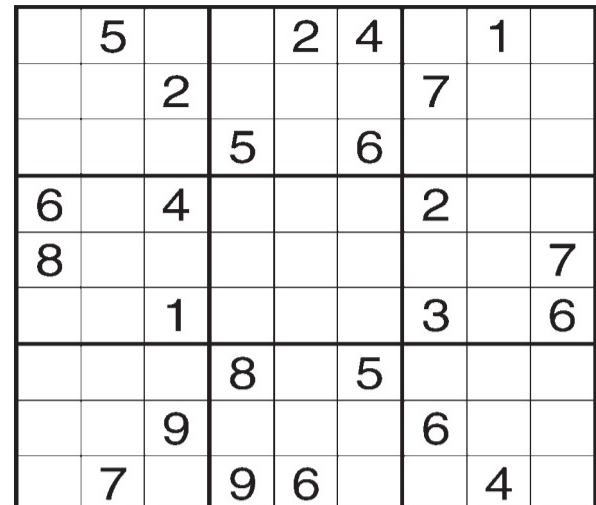
Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku



Difficulty Level ★★★★

1/17

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

8	3	4	2	1	5	9	6	7
7	6	2	9	3	8	1	5	4
5	9	1	7	6	4	3	8	2
4	1	3	6	8	9	2	7	5
2	8	7	4	5	3	6	1	9
6	5	9	1	7	2	8	4	3
3	7	5	8	9	1	4	2	6
9	2	8	5	4	6	7	3	1
1	4	6	3	2	7	5	9	8

105

- 1 Get bigger
 5 As __ a wet hen
 10 __ upon; attacks
 14 "All roads lead
 to __"
 15 Potato exporter
 16 Stringed
 instrument
 17 Hostels
 18 Canadian
 province
 20 __ tai; rum
 cocktail
 21 Untainted
 22 Firebug's crime
 23 Babble
 25 JFK's
 predecessor
 26 Stir up
 28 Lifts with effort
 31 Palm tree fruits
 32 Military air raid
 34 Sit-__; exercises
 for the abs
 36 Eras
 37 Beer brand
 38 Get ready, for
 short
 39 Fellows
 40 Wooden
 container
 41 Not tipsy
 42 Less fresh
 44 Overcast
 45 Depressed
 46 Barbecue
 47 Colorado resort
 50 Sun's ray
 51 One of Santa's
 helpers
 54 __ with; write to
 57 Part of the leg
 58 Horse's gait
 59 Eye color
 60 Decorates a cake
 61 Makes clothes
 62 Jagged
 63 Soldier's supper

DOWN

1 Not at all
 promising
 2 Columnist __
 Barrett

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

A crossword puzzle grid with the following words filled in:

- Across:
 - EAR
 - DIES
 - SLAP
 - SPAGHETTI
 - RUES
 - SPORTS
 - PORES
 - ROAD
 - ACT
 - THEOLOGY
 - RIM
 - WASA
 - IRON
 - SMUG
 - HYPE
- Down:
 - SLEDS
 - AUDIE
 - SKIED
 - TOME
 - ICED
 - MAC
 - PLEASANT
 - CHINA
 - ALOFT
 - GEESE
 - SLAYER
 - REAM
 - IMPENDING
 - ZOOMS
 - EDDIE
 - BESTS
 - NEAT
 - GAME
 - RAN

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- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 38 Swimming spot | 50 Clown of old TV |
| 40 Exact duplicate | 52 Bruce & Spike |
| 41 Slender | 53 ___ up; admit |
| 43 Warns | one's guilt |
| 44 Baby's bed | 55 Feminine |
| 46 Trait transmitters | pronoun |
| 47 Play divisions | 56 Golfing term |
| 48 Miffed | 57 Novak or |
| 49 Ship's bow | Delaney |

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Aruba Bank N.V. Acc.#332668
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RBC Royal Bank Acc.#1330772

Assistant Director

Xiomara Arends

Editor in Chief

Linda Reijnders

(linda.reijnders@cspnv.com)

Liza Koolman (Management assistant)

Editors

Richard Brooks

Jeancarlo Trinidad

Sales

Linda Reijnders

(linda.reijnders@cspnv.com)

Sulaika Croes

ClassifiedsRachelle Danje
(rachelle.danje@cspnv.com)**Distribution and Collection**

accounting@bondia.com

Social / WebsiteCristian Soto Garcia
Pilar Flores
Juan Luis Pinto**Columnists**Anthony Croes
Joris Zantvoort
Louedsko Maduro
Shanella Pantophlet
Steve Francees
Thais FrankenWeststraat 22
T: 582-7800E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com
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La Cabana Blue green points
60.000 points US\$40K

Caribbean Palm Village

1BR WK # 2 room# D 102 even
year
1 BR WK# 2 room # G303 Odd
year
1 BR WK# 3 room # B203 even
year
1 BR WK# 3 room # G108 Odd
year.

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Aruba Divi Phoenix
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Rm 644 33 weeks remain
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Divi Links Golf

1 BR WK # 1
25 weeks remain \$8000
1 BR WK # 1 and 2
32 weeks remain \$ 9000 each
Studio wk # 5 and 6
25 and 30 Weeks remain \$
17,000 Both

Divi Links Golf

1 BR WK # 4 and 5
25 and 30 weeks remain \$ 9000
each

1 BR WK # 4

20 weeks remain \$9000

Divi Village

1 BR WK # 1
24 weeks remain \$ 9000
Studio WK # 1
23 weeks remain \$ 8000
Studio WK # 6
22weeks remain \$8000

Paradise Beach Villas

1 BR WK # 1 and 2
2nd phase 2nd floor
Pool/ Ocean View \$ 9000 each

Aruba Divi Phoenix

Studio WK # 1
Ocean Front Villas
3rd Floor 35 weeks remain
\$8500

Aruba Divi Phoenix

2 BR Penthouse WK # 1
28 weeks remain \$35K
1 BR WK # 6 in the front villas
2nd floor 28 weeks remain \$
12,500
1BR WK # 8 \$ 16,500
6 building 4 th floor 29 weeks
remain

Tropicana Resort

1 BR WK # 4,5,6,7,8
\$7000 Per week

1 BR WK # 7 \$7000

Renaissance
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1 BR WK # 9 \$8500
4th floor harbor/ocean view

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Dream Home For Sale

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Robot recreates the walk of a 290-million-year-old creature

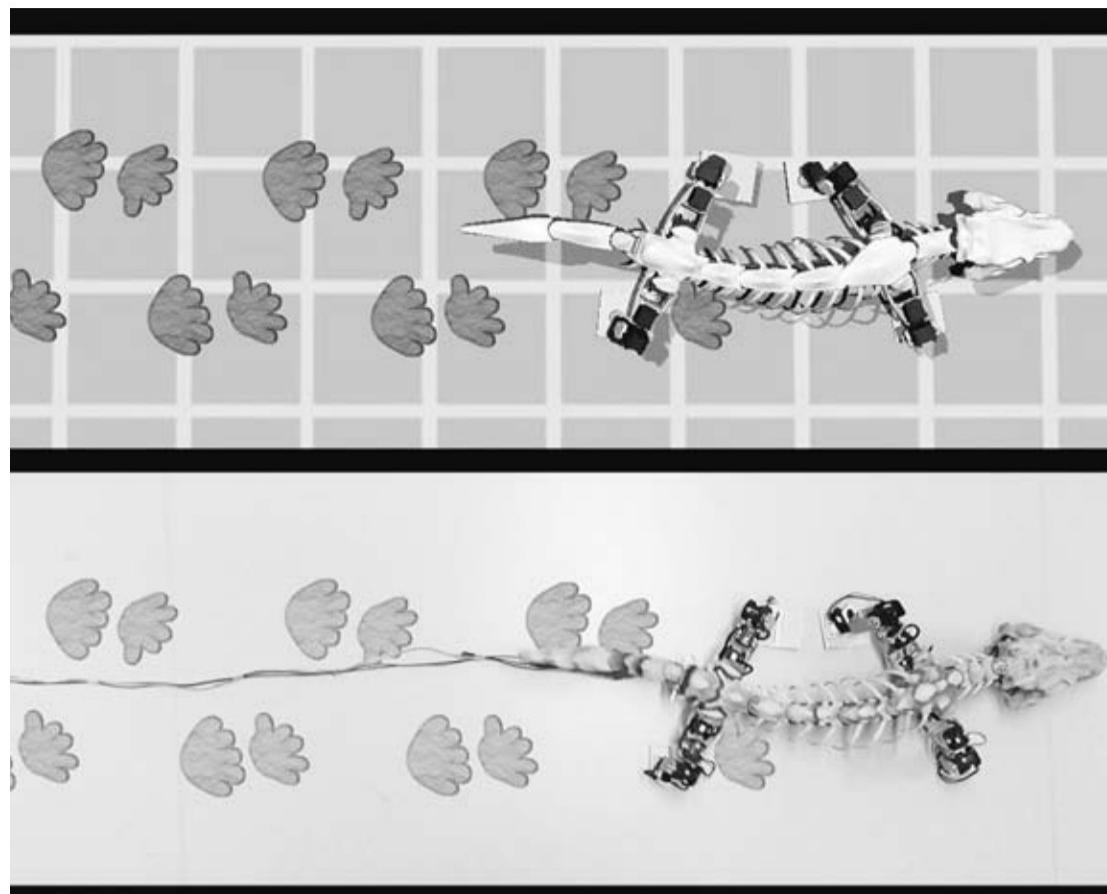
WASHINGTON (AP) — How did the earliest land animals move? Scientists have used a nearly 300-million-year old fossil skeleton and preserved ancient footprints to create a moving robot model of prehistoric life.

Evolutionary biologist John Nyakatura at Humboldt University in Berlin has spent years studying a 290-million-year-old fossil dug up in central Germany's Broemacker quarry in 2000. The four-legged plant-eater lived before the dinosaurs and fascinates scientists "because of its position on the tree of life," said Nyakatura. Researchers believe the creature is a "stem amniote" — an early land-dwelling animal that later evolved into modern mammals, birds and reptiles.

Scientists believe the first amphibious animals emerged on land 350 million years ago and the first amniotes emerged around 310 million years ago.

The fossil, called Orobates pabsti, is a "beautifully preserved and articulated skeleton," said Nyakatura. What's more, scientists have previously identified fossilized footprints left by the 3-foot-long (90 cm) creature.

Nyakatura teamed up with



This image from video provided by John Nyakatura in January 2019 shows computer-generated and robotic simulations of an Orobates Pabsti dinosaur's footprints while walking.

Associated Press

robotics expert Kamilo Melo at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne to develop a model of how the creature moved. Their results were published Wednesday in the journal Nature.

The researchers built a life-size replica of the prehistoric beast — "we carefully modeled each and every

bone," said Nyakatura — and then tested the motion in various ways that would lead its gait to match the ancient tracks, ruling out combinations that were not anatomically possible. They repeated the exercise with a slightly-scaled up robot version, which they called OroBOT. The robot is made of motors connect-

ed by 3D-printed plastic and steel parts. The model "helps us to test real-world dynamics, to account for gravity and friction," said Melo. The team also compared their models to living animals, including salamanders and iguanas. Technology such as robotics, computer modeling and CT scans are trans-

forming paleontology, "giving us ever more compelling reconstructions of the past," said Andrew Farke, curator at the Raymond M. Alf Museum of Paleontology in Claremont, California, who was not involved in the study.

Based on the robot model, the scientists said they think the creature had more advanced locomotion than previously thought for such an early land animal. (Think more scampering than slithering.)

"It walked with a fairly upright posture," said Melo. "It didn't drag its belly or tail." University of Maryland paleontologist Thomas R. Holtz, who was not involved in the study, said the research suggests "an upright stance goes further back than we originally thought."

Stuart Sumida, a paleontologist at California State University in San Bernardino and part of the initial team that excavated Orobates fossils, called it "an exciting study." Sumida, who was not involved in the robot project, said the work provided "a much more confident window in to what happened long ago. It isn't a time machine, but Nyakatura and colleagues have given us a tantalizing peek." □



This 2016 photo provided by NASA shows the Getz Ice Shelf from 2016's Operation Icebridge in Antarctica.

Associated Press

Antarctica is losing ice 6 times faster today than in 1980s

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Antarctica is melting more than six times faster than it did in the 1980s, a new study shows.

Scientists used aerial photographs, satellite measurements and computer models to track how fast the southern-most continent has been melting since 1979 in 176 individual basins. They found the ice loss to be accelerating dramatically — a key indicator of human-caused climate change.

Since 2009, Antarctica has lost almost 278 billion tons

(252 billion metric tons) of ice per year, the new study found. In the 1980s, it was losing 44 billion tons (40 billion metric tons) a year.

The recent melting rate is 15 percent higher than what a study found last year. Eric Rignot, a University of California, Irvine, ice scientist, was the lead author on the new study in Monday's Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. He said the big difference is that his satellite-based

study found East Antarctica, which used to be considered stable, is losing 56 billion tons (51 billion metric tons) of ice a year. Last

year's study, which took several teams' work into consideration, found little to no loss in East Antarctica recently and gains in the past.

Melting in West Antarctica and the Antarctica Peninsula account for about four-fifths of the ice loss. East Antarctica's melting "increases the risk of multiple meter (more than 10 feet) sea level rise over the next century or so," Rignot said.

Richard Alley, a Pennsylvania State University scientist not involved in Rignot's study, called it "really good science." □

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Satisfaction: Rolling Stones to headline 50th Jazz Fest

By CHEVEL JOHNSON

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival has got satisfaction: The Rolling Stones are among the headliners for the 50th anniversary festival.

Organizers on Tuesday confirmed reports that Mick Jagger and his band will play. Also headlining the 8-day event, which runs April 25-28 and May 2-5, are Katy Perry, the Dave Matthews Band, Al Green, Pitbull, Santana, Jerry Lee Lewis, Aaron Neville and gospel great Shirley Caesar.

"Fifty years is very rare and to be here, still, just as strong, just as relevant is amazing," festival producer Quint Davis said.

"For the Rolling Stones and Katy Perry — two of the most highly produced artists — to want to come play our festival, held in a tent, during the day with the



In this Nov. 15, 2016 file photo, The Rolling Stones, from left, Ronnie Wood, Keith Richards, Mick Jagger and Charlie Watts attend the opening night party for "Exhibitionism" at Industria in New York.

Associated Press

scent of BBQ and oyster po-boys wafting over the field, that's just incredible." Perry is scheduled to perform April 27, the first Saturday, while the Stones will take over the festival's largest stage Thursday, May 2.

Seeing the Stones' performance will require a special ticket good only for that day. Cost? \$185.

Tickets go on a pre-sale Thursday for Louisiana residents only, to buy tickets for the Rolling Stones' date. Up

to two tickets can be purchased on the Plaza level of the Superdome from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tickets go on sale Friday for the entire festival at 10 a.m. in New Orleans or at www.nojazzfest.com or www.nojazzfest.com. □

ticketmaster.com or by calling 1-800-745-3000.

For the first time, the festival's 11 other stages will go dark when Jagger and company hit the stage.

"Even though it's going to be a full fest day, with performances on all 12 stages, we don't want the stages where the Stones aren't performing to compete for an audience," Davis said. "We don't want the other stages to not have any people there, so we're gonna shut them down about an hour before the Stones perform, encourage them to get something to eat, to get a good spot and enjoy the show." Before the line-up was announced at the news conference, Davis showcased musicians who performed at the first jazz festival — Ellis Marsalis on piano, vocalist Germaine Bazzle, bass player George French, James Rivers on saxophone and Johnny Vidacovich on drums. □

Loretta Lynn plans 87th birthday all-star tribute concert

By KRISTIN M. HALL

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Country music queen Loretta Lynn has big plans for her 87th birthday this April in the form of an all-star tribute concert featuring Jack White, Garth Brooks, George Strait and many more.

The "Coal Miner's Daughter" singer-songwriter on Monday announced details of the April 1 show in Nashville, Tennessee, at the Bridgestone Arena.

She released her album "Wouldn't It Be Great" last year, but hasn't been performing publicly since she had a stroke in 2017 and missed being honored at the CMT Artists of the Year show last October due to an illness.

Other artists scheduled to perform are Alan Jackson, Trisha Yearwood, Little Big Town, Martina McBride, Miranda Lambert, Keith Urban, Kacey Musgraves, Brandy Clark, Darius Rucker and the Pistol Annies.

Lynn said she's not planning any duets during the



Country music legend Loretta Lynn appears on stage at the Grand Ole Opry House, Monday, Jan. 14, 2019, in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

concert, instead saying she just wants the artists to sing for her. "I know what I want to hear and I am pretty sure they will be singing them," Lynn said.

Still the Country Music Hall of Famer said she would eventually like to perform

again. "Feels like I have been gone a hundred years," she told The Associated Press.

Despite her health problems, including fracturing a hip, she has continued to put out music and earned a Grammy nomination this

year for best country solo performance for her song "Wouldn't It Be Great," which she wrote about her late husband Oliver "Doolittle" Lynn. "I sang that song to him," Lynn said. "It was the last song I sang to him. And he

always said, 'Honey, that's a hit.' I said, 'Honey, you think so?'"

Brooks joined her on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry, where she was presented with a birthday cake. The two artists are close, and Brooks told a story about how he was her date when she was given a lifetime achievement award from the Recording Academy in 2010.

She insisted that he bring her in his truck rather than a limousine, Brooks said, and she climbed inside wearing one of her big ball gowns that she's fond of wearing. "That truck still has so much glitter in it," Brooks said.

Lynn said after the press conference that Brooks came to her while she was having health issues to pray over her.

"When I took sick, he came and prayed for me a couple of times," Lynn said. "My back was hurting so bad and when he got through praying, my back eased up. And that's true. This is the truth. Prayer helps." □

The underwhelming rollercoaster of 'Glass'

By LINDSEY BAHR

Samuel L. Jackson's Elijah Price, or Mr. Glass, as he prefers to be called, was by far the most compelling part of M. Night Shyamalan's slow-burn comic book send-up "Unbreakable." A brilliant, tortured manipulator and superhero enthusiast suffering from osteogenesis imperfecta (i.e. brittle bone disease), Glass is that kind of charismatic supervillain that you can't get enough of.

Nineteen years is certainly a long time to wait for more Mr. Glass. But Shyamalan, even after naming this long-gestating film after Jackson's character, decides to withhold him from the audience even longer. Yes, he makes Mr. Glass a highly sedated vegetable who gets to do little more than blink and intensely stare at the camera for what feels like more than half of the movie.

It's one of the many ways in which "Glass," which seems to delight in building up anticipation only to pull the rug out from under



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Samuel L. Jackson, from left, James McAvoy and Bruce Willis in a scene from M. Night Shyamalan's "Glass."

Associated Press

you, manages to both frustrate and underwhelm. I'm sure it's some kind of meta-commentary on the futility of serialized storytelling, the contrivances and deification of comic book culture and easily malleable audience expectations, but in execution it mostly feels like a tub full of half-baked

ideas that never really coalesce into something exciting, meaningful or all that memorable.

"Glass" definitely doesn't care to help if you haven't seen "Unbreakable" or "Split," either. It just dives right in with little exposition. We see Bruce Willis's David Dunn taking a couple of teen pranksters to task. Then it jumps to James McAvoy's multiple person-

abilities, who've decided to take four teenage cheerleaders hostage because they're "impure" and "need to be punished." David, who is working alongside his now-grown son Joseph (Spencer Treat Clark, the same actor from "Unbreakable," which is actually a nice touch), has been trying to find the missing cheerleaders. Joseph warns him to be careful,

because David has also been branded a public nuisance for all of his would-be good deeds that have left criminals and victims injured and looking for someone to sue. If you're thinking, wait, isn't this sort of the plot of "Incredibles," just wait because it even brushes up against some "Incredibles 2" themes, intentionally or not.

David and the "Horde" (the term used to describe the collective of all of McAvoy's personalities, which range from a 9-year-old boy and an older British woman, to a terrifying flesh-eating creature called "The Beast") meet and low-budget fight a bit, but are interrupted by the authorities and Sarah Paulson's Dr. Ellie Staple who take them to the psychiatric hospital where Price is. Dr. Staple explains with oozing condescension that she specializes in treating those afflicted by delusions of grandeur — aka, those who think they have superpowers. She says their abilities and their weaknesses are all in the mind, and can be explained away by science and childhood traumas. □

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the upside
MON-FRI 4:00 | 6:40 | 9:20
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THE NEW DRAGON BALL Z
MON-FRI 4:45 | 7:00 | 9:15
FRI 4:45 | 7:00 | 9:15 | 11:30
SAT 2:30 | 4:45 | 7:00 | 9:15 | 11:30
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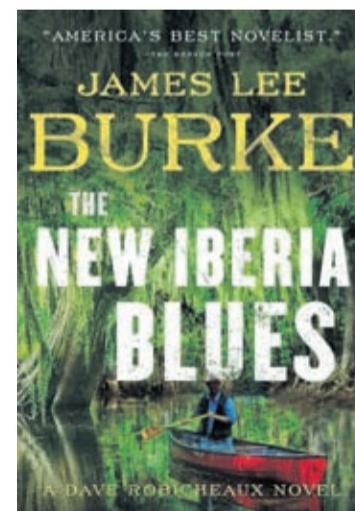
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James Lee Burke's new novel is engaging, emotional mystery



This cover image released by Simon & Schuster shows "The New Iberia Blues: A Dave Robicheaux Novel," by James Lee Burke.

Associated Press

By JEFF AYERS

Associated Press

"The New Iberia Blues: a Dave Robicheaux Novel"

(Simon and Schuster), by James Lee Burke. James Lee Burke's novels have mysteries that light the fuse of the story, but the almost poetic prose sets his novels apart. A boy that detective Dave Robicheaux knew almost 25 years ago left town to pursue his dream of becoming a Hollywood film director. Desmond Cormier found success and moves back with awards and respect. Robicheaux meets him not to congratulate him, but to inquire about the body of a young woman who was found brutally murdered near his property. Cormier says he has no idea what happened, but Robicheaux has his doubts. Soon another suspect becomes the prime candidate when one of Ro-

bicheaux's friends says he saw a man jump off a train and run away. He regrets not reporting it sooner, and it becomes clear that he witnessed the escape of an inmate named Hugo Tillinger who was in prison for murder and arson. He had claimed he was innocent and an organization known for helping prisoners overturn their convictions was looking into his case. The woman who met with Tillinger is Robicheaux's murder victim. It seems like an open-and-shut case, but evidence and motive are never that transparent. This time the story is not about the mystery itself, but more about the lyrical journey into Robicheaux's past and present that will keep the readers in awe. □

Grammy-nominated album shines light on transgender pioneer

By KRISTIN M. HALL

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) —

For decades, Jackie Shane was a musical mystery: a riveting black transgender soul singer who packed out nightclubs in Toronto in the 1960s, but then disappeared after 1971.

Some speculated she had died, but her legacy lived on among music historians and R&B collectors who paid big money for her vinyl records. But in 2010, the Canadian Broadcasting Company produced an audio documentary about her, awakening a wider interest in the pioneering singer. Today her face is painted on a massive 20-story musical mural in Toronto with other influential musicians like Muddy Waters.

In 2014, Doug McGowan, an A&R scout for archival record label Numero Group, finally reached her via phone in Nashville, Tennessee, where she was born in 1940. After much effort, McGowan got her agree to work with them on a remarkable two-CD set of her live and studio recordings that was released in 2017 called "Any Other Way," which has been nominated for best historical album at this year's Grammy Awards. Shane, now 78, has lived a very private life since she stopped performing. In fact, no one involved in album has yet to meet her in person as she only agrees to talk on the phone. But she realized after the CBC documentary that she could no longer hide. News outlets began calling and her photos started appearing in newspapers and magazines after the release of the album. RuPaul and LaVerne Cox have tweeted stories about Shane.

"I had been discovered," Shane told The Associated Press in a recent phone interview. "It wasn't what I wanted, but I felt good about it. After such a long time, people still cared. And now those people who are just discovering me, it's just overwhelming." Grammy-winning music journalist Rob Bowman spent dozens of hours on the phone with Shane in-



This album cover released by Numero Group shows Jackie Shane's "Any Other Way," which has been nominated for best historical album at this year's Grammy Awards on Feb. 10.

Associated Press

Interviewing her for the liner notes in the album. Her story, Bowman says, is so remarkable that even Hollywood couldn't dream it up. Born in the Jim Crow era and raised during the heyday of Nashville's small but influential R&B scene, Shane was confident in herself and musically inclined since she was a child. She learned how to sing in Southern churches and gospel groups, but she learned about right and wrong from watching a con artist posing as a minister selling healing waters to the faithful.

From an early age, she knew who she was and never tried to hide it.

"I started dressing (as a female) when I was five," Shane said. "And they wondered how I could keep the high heels on with my feet so much smaller than the shoe. I would press forward and would, just like Mae West, throw myself from side to side. What I am simply saying is I could be no one else."

By the time she was 13, she

considered herself a woman in a man's body and her mother unconditionally supported her.

"Even in school, I never had any problems," Shane said. "People have accepted me."

She played drums and became a regular session player for Nashville R&B and gospel record labels and went out on tour with artists like Jackie Wilson. She's known Little Richard since she was a teenager and later in the '60s met Jimi Hendrix, who spent time gigging on Nashville's Jefferson Street.

To this day, Shane playfully scoffs at Little Richard's antics and knows more than a few wild stories about him. "I grew up with Little Richard. Richard is crazy, don't even go there," Shane said with a laugh.

But soon the South's Jim Crow laws became too harsh for her to live with.

"I can come into your home. I can clean your house. I can raise your children. Cook your food. Take care of you," Shane said.

"But I can't sit beside you in a public place? Something is wrong here."

One day in Nashville she had been playing with acclaimed soul singer Joe Tex when he encouraged her to leave the South and pursue her musical career elsewhere.

She began playing gigs in Boston, Montreal and eventually Toronto, which despite being a majority white city at the time still had a budding R&B musical scene, according to Bowman. She performed with Frank Motley, who was known for playing two trumpets at once.

"Jackie was a revelation," Bowman said. "Quite quickly the black audience in Toronto embraced her. Within a couple of years, Jackie's audiences were 50-50 white and black."

Bowman said that in the early '60s, the term transgender wasn't widely known at all and being anything but straight was often feared by people. Most audiences perceived Shane as a gay male, Bow-

man said. In the pictures included in the album's liner notes, her onstage outfits were often very feminine pantsuits and her face is adorned with cat eyes and dramatic eyebrows.

For Shane, her look onstage was as important as the music.

"I would travel with about 20 trunks," Shane said. "Show business is glamour. When you walk out there, people should say, 'Whoa! I like that!' When I walk out onstage, I'm the show."

She put out singles and a live album, covering songs like "Money (That's What I Want)," "You Are My Sunshine," and "Any Other Way," which was regionally popular in Boston and Toronto in 1963. Her live songs are populated with extended monologues in which Shane takes on the role of a preacher, sermonizing on her life, sexual politics and much more.

"I humble myself before my audience," Shane explained. "I am going to sing to you and talk to you and do all the things I can so when you leave here, you'll be back here again."

She was beloved in Toronto and still considers it her home.

"You cannot choose where you are born, but you can choose where you call home," Shane said. "And Toronto is my home."

But her connection to her mother was so strong that ultimately it led Shane to leave show business in 1971. Her mother's husband died and Shane didn't want to leave her mother living alone. But she also felt a bit exhausted by the pace.

"I needed to step back from it," Shane said. "Every night, two or three shows and concerts. I just felt I needed a break from it."

Since the release of "Any Other Way," Shane often gets the question about whether she would ever perform again now that so many more people are discovering her music.

"I don't know," Shane said. "Because it takes a lot out of you. I give all I can. You are really worn out when you walk off that stage." □

Why US classrooms are starting to resemble arcades

By MICHAEL MELIA
WALLINGFORD, Conn.

(AP) — It's 1 o'clock on a Wednesday afternoon in Wallingford, Connecticut, and about 20 children are watching a screen at the front of the room as they take turns navigating challenges and collecting virtual currency to unlock powers, outfits and pets for their characters.

The game they're playing has some similarities to the online battle game "Fortnite." But the kids aren't fighting one another — they're racking up points for participation and good behavior in their classroom at Dag Hammarskjold Middle School, where their teacher is presenting a home economics lesson with help from Classcraft, a fantasy-themed educational program.

"It's actually a lot of fun," said 13-year-old Caiden McManus. "The pets — that's my favorite thing to do. To train the pets, you gain as many gold pieces as possible so you can get the new outfits and stuff."

Peek inside your average classroom these days, and you're likely to see teachers using apps, websites and software that borrow elements from video games to connect with students living technology-infused lives. By all accounts, they're fun to use, and studies have found that some can be effective. But there is also skepticism about how often students who use them are better educated, or just better entertained.

Dag Hammarskjold consumer sciences teacher Gianna Gurga said she had been looking for a way to get more out of her students. Students have been more motivated and performed better in her classes since she began using Classcraft in spring 2017, she said, and she has signed up a handful of other teachers in the school.

"My kids are so addicted to it in the best way possible," Gurga said.

In one session, the classroom filled with suspenseful music as Gurga began rapid-fire questioning. With



In this Sept. 20, 2018 photo, fifth grade teacher Heather Dalton, center, works with students Julian Ryno, left, and Ma'Kenley Burns, doing math problems on the DreamBox system at Charles Barnum Elementary School in Groton, Conn.

Associated Press

each correct answer, chosen from multiple choices on the screen, students gained points that could be used for avatar upgrades, privileges like listening to music in class, and a competition against other classrooms. The available characters -- warriors, mages and healers -- each have different powers and must collaborate to succeed.

Points are awarded for class participation as well as good behavior, but the kids can also be penalized, as was the case for one of Gurga's seventh-graders who told a classmate to "shut up."

A middle school in New York City, Quest to Learn, was the first public school to fully embrace game-based learning when it opened nearly a decade ago. The

Manhattan school, developed by game theorists with the Institute of Play, has been closely followed since by researchers hoping for hard evidence of results from technology-inspired gamification.

In the last school year, 43 percent of Quest to Learn's students were up to state standards on the state English test, compared to 41 percent citywide, and 29 percent of its students met state standards on the state math test, compared to 33 percent citywide. But advocates say standardized testing alone does not tell the story. Outside studies have shown growth in soft skills such as collaboration, creative thinking and empathy, according to Ross Flatt, director of programs and partnerships for the Institute of Play, a nonprofit studio that uses game design principles to develop new learning experiences.

To help educators identify programs with promise, the Johns Hopkins University Center for Research and Reform in Education launched a website that rates math and learning programs based on how they meet evidence standards for effectiveness under federal education law. The center's director, Robert Slavin, said there are some programs that have shown positive impacts but



In this May 23, 2018 photo, teacher Gianna Gurga, left, speaks to students Faith Broadway, center, and Maisha Chowdhury Jabbia, right, as she leads a class on financial literacy at Dag Hammarskjold Middle School in Wallingford, Conn.

Associated Press

on average improvements are small.

"When people talk about technology transforming everything, it may in the future, but it's not there yet," Slavin said.

Some question whether the graphics, videos and sounds in so many programs are doing harm by teaching students to pursue the rewards.

"Part of life is figuring out how to learn to love things and how to persevere in things even when it's not extrinsically motivated," said Christopher Devers, an education researcher at Johns Hopkins who said his review of the evidence suggests that on balance, games-based approaches tend to influence students in negative ways.

One of the better known programs, DreamBox, teaches math by offering a series of problems that can grow increasingly challenging as the student enters correct answers. The program, which began as an app for consumers, entered the school market in 2011 and last year had 2.6 million student users. The company charges a fee of \$7,500 per school building per year.

DreamBox CEO Jessie Woolley-Wilson said the program is intended as an aid for teachers who can't be expected to personalize learning for two dozen students simultaneously.

"Let's figure out a way to support a way to deliver the best teaching, and allow the learning guardian to get back to art of teaching," she said. "Technology can deliver that math personalization in a way that can give the learning guardian actionable insights."

In Groton, Connecticut, early users of DreamBox reported anecdotal evidence of improved outcomes and schools are now using it district-wide. In Heather Dalton's fifth-grade classroom at the Charles Barnum Elementary School, students spent the first half of a recent class working individually on DreamBox with headphones on. □